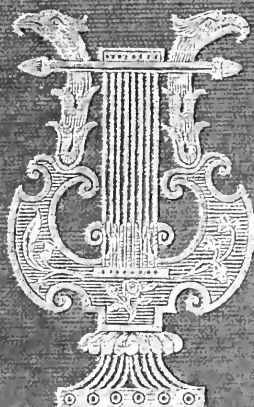


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W. MUIRFADY, R.A. DEL.

‘Up! pallid dreamer! look on *me*!
Mine are the joyous day and night—’

MADONNA PIA,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY JAMES GREGOR GRANT.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	PAGE
Pale Student !	1
The withered Rose and the withered Heart	6
Impromptu, to a beautiful and jealous Lady	17
The Lady and the Hindoos	18
"Silent, thou stern Reprover, be !"	21
Körner's Sister to her dead Brother	23
To an exquisite Singer	27
"Wandering in Youth."—A Fragment	29
"As the Cloudlets of Eve"—Lyric	32
"'Tis Night that brings"—Lyric	34
"Where's the Charm of Loving?"	37
The two Rings	40
"Alas! the Weariness of Life !"	42

SONNETS.

MEMORIALS OF AN ENGLISH LAKE TOUR.

Invocation	47
Solitude	48

	PAGE
Ullswater Lake	49
Pass of Kirkstone	50
Winandermere	51
The same, continued	52
The same. Night-fall	53
The same. Night	54
The same. A Voice singing	55
Langdale	56
Dungeon-Ghyll	57
Blea Tarn	58
Base of Scawfell. Druidical Circle	59
The same, continued	60
The Rising of the Mist	61
The River Duddon	62
Langdale Pike. Wrynose. Hardknot	63
Deseent into Eskdale	64
Eskdale. The Woolpack	65
Eskdale	66
The River Esk	67
Eskdale. Departure	68
Dalegarth Force	69
Margin of Wast-water	70
Ascent of Scawfell Pike	71
The same, continued	72
Seawfell Pike. The Summit gained	73

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
The same, continued	74
The same. The Descent	75
Buttermere	76
Buttermere. The Penalty : Fever	77
The same, continued	78
Buttermere. Recovery	79
Lowes Water. Cromach	80
Scale-Force	81
The same, continued,	82
The Vale of Lorton	83
Valley of St. John. The Castle Rocks	84
The same. Faith in Tradition	85
The same	86
Rydal. Wordsworth	87
Derwent Water	88
Southey	89
Farewell to the Lakes	90
Farewell, continued	91
Conclusion	92

OTHER POEMS.

The Mountain Child	93
Sabbath Silence	103
“ At Railway speed ”	109

	PAGE
"What, upon this gloomy Strand"	110
"O World!"	112
"There's a Tomb."—A Dirge	114
Sing not of Love!	117
Love and Truth	121
"Art thou silent?"	122
To the Silent	125
"Give me a Goblet"	138
A Health! To E. G.	140
Elegiac Stanzas upon the Death of a Lady	142
Stanzas—"Never forgive!"	148
On approaching my Birth-place	149
"What lovely Eyes!"	151
The Secret	153
The Vision.—A Fragment	154
Stanzas upon the Death of the Amiable Miss I * * * * *	
of W * * * * *	159

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

"This Life, along whose early Paths"	162
"How shall I image, save by some worn Thought"	163
"Could I re-tread the Regions of the Past"	164
"O Joy to which all else are joyless Things!"	165
"If it be true—as one great Bard hath said"	166

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
"O lovely Memories of Love's sweet Hours!"	167
"Oh, Life, Love, Youth!"	168
"Well, then, fair Spirit!"	169
"That I have dared to love thee!"	170
"Now, while my torn Heart"	171
"Even as one from Dreams, half Hope, half Fear"	172
"These Fits must have an End"	173
Christmas Day, 1844	174
Peace, or War?	175
Continued	176
The Death of Southey	177
To M. S. M.	178
Continued	179
Continued	180
"Know Thyself"	181
Love laughs at Locksmiths	182
"Man's a Strange Creature"	183
The World	184
Continued	185
Continued	186
Continued	187
Continued	188
Concluded	189
First Tokens of Decline	190
Durham	191

	PAGE
To W. F. Durham	192
To Anna ———, near Keswick	194
Continued	195
Continued	196
My Sisters	197
My Brothers	198
To A——r W——r. America	199
The two Graves	200
Continued	201

OTHER POEMS.

Imaginary Inscription for the Burial-place of Grace Darling	202
Recollection of a Lady in * * * * * Abbey	213
The Woodland Glade	217
“We’ll go no more a roving”	221
“Where shall we roam, dear Maid?”—Lyric	224
Beauty and the Beast	225
The Music-Victim	229
Stanzas—“Thus tossed upon the wintry Deep”	235
Versicles for Fathers and Mothers only	237
“The Struggle is o’er”	242
Stanzas—“As one from Delirium waking”	245
Love and Parting	247
“And why? my startled Spirit asks”	248
The Features	250

SONNETS

WRITTEN IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM, 1846.

	PAGE
Near Guines—"Is <i>this</i> the gay and lightsome Land?"	255
To my Daughter. Parting	256
Brussels	257
Continued	258
The Wood of Soignee	259
Continued	260
Waterloo. The Field of Battle	261
Hougomont	262
Continued. The Chapel	263
Death-place of Picton	264
The Vanquished	265
The Victor	266
Humanity	267
Continued	268
Brussels. Fête de la Ville. The Cathedral	269
Continued. Te Deum	270
Continued. Meditation	271
Continued. The Queen of the Belgians	272
Antwerp	273
Continued. The Descent from the Cross	274

	PAGE
Ghent. Summit of the Beffroi	275
Continued. The "Padden Hoeck," Van Artavelde's House	276
Continued. Font in which Charles V. was baptized . . .	277
Bruges. Recollection of Wordsworth's Sonnet	278
Continued. Decay	279
Continued. Recollection of Wordsworth's Poem beginning "In Bruges town is many a street"	280
Conclusion. Aspect of Belgium	282

OTHER POEMS.

The Pilgrim and the Flower	283
"With Spirit crushed"	289
Lyric—"Again I come to thee, Love!"	291
Monody on the Death of Mrs. M——A——, of Edinburgh	292
The Request. To M. S. M., departing for Italy . . .	296
To Florence. By a returning Exile	298
Hymn of the Penitent	300
Song—"Flow on, thou silent Stream"	301
"A ceaseless Craving"	303
Stanzas—"Where is the Life that late we led?" . . .	305
Madrigal. From Voltaire	307
"I remember"	308
The Old and the New, or 1842 and 1843	310
A Prayer	312

CONTENTS.

xiii

	PAGE
The Visions of our early Youth	513
The King and the Baron	315
Wail for the Dead !	323
Love, Beauty, and Verse. A Trifle	327
The Shortest Day	330
The Cottage Beauty	334
Holiday	338
Sequel to " The Pilgrim and the Flower "	340
The Mould and the Mattock	348
Sonnet to the three beautiful Misses R——, of T—— G——, Yorkshire	350
Youth and Age ; or, May and December	351
Hic jacet. A Churchyard Lyric	355

POEMS.

PALE STUDENT!

“ Why so sad and pale, fond lover?
Why so sad and pale?”

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

They met beside a fountain's brim,
In glittering garb, in sorrowing weed;
And thus spake one, a gallant trim,
“ Pale student! why so wan and dim?”
And thus the pale one answered him,
“ I read—I read.”

“And what, pale student, dost thou read?”

“A mournful book—my own sad heart!”

“And what thy mournful study’s meed?”

“A truth that makes the volume bleed—

We know not that we love indeed

Until we part!

“Then come the gloom, the blank, the chill,

The craving and the aching void—

The doubt—the dread—the jealous thrill—

Desires that mock the struggling will—

Wild hopes, though baffled, burning still,

And still destroyed!

“The day drags through, a load to bear,

And, heavier still, the sleepless night:

And all looks bleak that once was fair,

And life grows lifeless everywhere,

And Love and Nature seem to share

A common blight!”

“T is thus, pale student, horror seems

O'er loveliest things to jaundiced eyes :
And all around with joy that teems,
The glory of the woods and streams,
The rapture of the poet's dreams,
Take sickly dyes.

“ Better wert thou in cloisters grim,

Pale with their stern ascetic duty,
With beads to tell, and lamp to trim,
Than thus to mock, with spirit dim,
And lagging pulse and listless limb.
Glad Nature's beauty,

“ Up! pallid dreamer! look on *me*!

Mine are the joyous day and night—
Reckless I wander, fancy-free,
Reckless how fair the fairest be,
And cull from all I hear and see
A fresh delight.

“ For why, pale student, gaze and pore

Thus ever on a mournful page ?

Is Love but versed in *Sorrow's* lore ?

Then give the weary heart-toil o'er,

Tear the dark scroll, and be no more

A martyred sage.

“ Before thee Nature's volume lies,

A joyous and a lovely book !

The wisdom of the happy wise—

The lore that dims nor hearts nor eyes ;

Dash then away thy tears and sighs,

And therein look :

“ And haste the bitter school to quit,

Whose lessons thus the heart can scorch ;

Away ! like steeds that snap the bit—

Or birds from broken bars that flit ;

Must Wisdom's taper still be lit

At Misery's torch ?”

Then rose the student pale, and drew
His dark robe round his wasted frame ;
And deathlier pale his thin cheek grew,
And icier cold his thin lips' hue,
Whence, like a moan some ruin through,
These accents came :

“Go *thou!* and reckon thine own cold rede,
And scathless keep thine own cold heart ;
Mine would not, if it could, be freed—
Still must it ache, and throb, and bleed—
Still in its shattered core I read,
We know not that we love indeed
Until we part !”

THE WITHERED ROSE AND THE WITHERED HEART.

“Farò come colui, che piange, e dice.”

DANTE.

[The following Poem is an attempt to convey, with perfect truthfulness, an event of real life—a fact, related to the writer by the accomplished “lady-artist” referred to in the opening stanza. To her clear, simple, and pathetic recital he has adhered with almost literal fidelity; conscious, indeed, that no aid from fiction could deepen the profound feeling of the true story itself.]

Eye, nor hand, nor head up-raising,

Lone, and mute, and wrapt in thought,

Sat a lady-artist, gazing

Upon charms herself had wrought :

She beheld sweet features mated

With a form as sweetly shown,

And the eyes she had created

Shot sweet glances to her own.

Happy moment! seize it, prize it,
Ye with genius for your dower!
When the soul, through all that tries it,
Catches gleams of its own power—
When ye feel that years of toiling,
Vigil, sleeplessness, and pain,
Youthful health and pleasure spoiling,
Have not all been borne in vain!

Sudden came a light change o'er her,
Sudden jarred a closing door,
And a maiden stood before her,
Humbly clad, and weeping sore;
Weeping sore, and humbly clad,
And with looks so sad and fair,
Sorrow's self had grown more sad
E'en to gaze a moment there.

Modest fear and humble duty
 Struggled there alike to speak,
And pale Sadness strove with Beauty
 For the empire of her cheek :
Her sweet eyes, had Genius limned them,
 E'en the proudest fair beside,
Through the gushing tears that dimmed them,
 They had tamed that proud one's pride !

Sadder, fairer, that great city
 In its vast heart never knew,
And "the milder grief of pity"
 Thrilled the lady's through and through.
"Hush thee, hush thee, my poor maiden.
 Hush thy sobbing, and unfold
Why thus heavy, heavy laden
 With this anguish I behold ?

“What the bitter grief that wrings thee?

Who hath wronged, or who betrayed?

And what hope of solace brings thee

To a stranger thus, poor maid?”

That her heart was well-nigh broken

Then the mourner strove to say,

But the words she would have spoken

Died in bitter sobs away :—

Till, o'er sob and sigh prevailing,

Came her low sweet voice at last,

As ye hear a shipwrecked wailing

In the pauses of the blast :

“Lady, lady! I am making

Heavy moan for one that 's dead,

And my poor worn heart is breaking,

Spite of all the tears I shed!

“ Nothing stays them, nothing dries them,
And my weary lids I close
All in vain, for slumber flies them
Through the season of repose :
Many cares and griefs can borrow
Soothing help from tears, they say,
But *my* heavy, heavy sorrow
Tears can never wash away !”

“ Nay, but hush thee, my poor maiden ;
Hush thy weeping, and unfold
Who so heavy, heavy laden
With this anguish I behold ?”
“ ’T were a tale too long and dreary,
Oh ! too long and mournful too ;
E’en *your* gentle heart would weary
E’er my lips half sobbed it through !”

Then her voice grew faint and fainter,
Faint and fainter then it grew.
“Lady, you’re a portrait painter,
And for *that* I come to you.
You can paint whate’er’s before you,
You can paint whate’er you see,
And, oh, lady, I implore you,
Paint this WITHERED ROSE for me!

“Not as when ’t was blooming newly,
Freshly plucked the stem apart—
Paint it, lady, paint it *truly*,
Torn and withered, like *my* heart!”
From her bosom then she drew it,
Saying, “This, dear lady, this!”
And she prest her pale lips to it,
That grew paler with the kiss.

Then the lady said, " I hear thee,
And I guess at all thy woes ;
Therefore, cheer thee, maiden, cheer thee,
I will paint thy withered rose !
Bud, and leaf, and stem, all duly,
Even as this I see decay,
I will paint them for thee TRULY,
As a lady-artist may !"

" Lady, lady !" cried the mourner,
But it seemed as if the strength
Of that deep love which had borne her
Onward thus, grew weak at length ;
Glance and tone grew faint and fainter,
Like the lark's voice in a cloud—
" Lady, you 're a portrait painter,
And you paint the rich and proud :

Proud and titled, treasure-laden,
Here their portraits I behold ;
I am but a serving maiden,
And have little, little gold ! ”
“ Nay, but hush thee, my poor maiden ;
Speak not *thou* of gold, I pray ;
They that come so treasure-laden
For thy pictured flower will pay.”

With a pang—but she o’erpowered it—
“ Pardon, lady,” said she thrice,
“ I must buy that pictured flow’ret
For a sum, and for a price,
Poor the sum that I can tender—
Poor a serving maiden’s store ;
But if doubly poor and slender,
I could doubly toil for more.

“ Many flowers were growing near us,
When *he* wandered last with me,
With the heavens alone to hear us,
And the stars alone to see ;
Even then my tears were starting,
Though I thought I could discern
That which soothed the grief of parting
With the sweet hope of return.

“ And he said, ‘ I go, my dear one,
Ere we wed, once more to sea ;
Not a danger, could I fear one,
But I’d blithely risk for thee !
Treasure *this*—’ and, lightly stooping.
Gathered gently as he might
This poor rose, now wan and drooping.
Then so beautiful and bright !

“ In my bosom while I laid it—
 ‘ When again I come to thee,
Show me *that*,’ he said, ‘ though faded,
 And I’ll know thou thought’st of me !
Cheer thee, cheer thee ! though I ’m going
 Far away, love, trust that when
Summer roses next are blowing
 I shall come to thee again ! ’

“ He will come no more to me, lady !
 He will come no more to me !
In a far-off stormy sea, lady,
 He is buried far from me !
Far from me, and life, and love,
 Where the tempest struck the blow.
When the stormy night-blast roared above,
 And the billows raged below !

“ Oh, the days so long and dreary,
 Dragging heavy o’er me now !
Oh, the nights so long and weary,
 Heaping fire on my poor brow !
What is all I ’ve seen or see, lady ?
 All that is or yet must be ?
He will come no more to me, lady !
 He will come no more to me !

“ Now this rose is all I cherish,
 All I love in my despair,
And, before its last leaves perish.
 I would have it pictured fair—
Pictured fair, but pictured truly,
 Withered thus, and blighted sore,
That some gentle eyes may duly
 Weep when mine can weep no more ! ”

To her lip, as she'd devour it,
How that rose of love she bore!
How she kissed that dying flow'ret
Long and long, and o'er and o'er!
Then arising, broken-hearted,
Wailed her anguish forth anew,
Till the weeper who departed
Left the lady weeping too!

1846.

IMPROMPTU.

TO A BEAUTIFUL AND JEALOUS LADY.

"Never again!
Bitterest word!"

Why art thou jealous?—Canst thou gaze
On yonder mirror, and believe
That he who loves what *that* displays
Could ever practise to *deceive*?

O! be this bitter mood forgot !
And let thy sweetest smile atone
The wrong thou dost in judging not
His truth and fervour by thine own !

THE LADY AND THE HINDOOS.

It was an English lady,
And she met on English ground
Dusky wanderers from the Orient,
Turban-wreathed, and scarf-imbound ;

And their white robes round them streaming,
Some have heard the lady say,
Sent her gentle spirit dreaming
Many thousand leagues away !

There the lordly lion sallies

From the jungle where he reigns—

There the camel treads the valleys,

And the ostrich walks the plains—

There are mightier torrents gushing,

By the base of mightier towers—

There are fruits and flow'rets blushing.

Brighter, thousand-fold, than ours!

There, in ceaseless dartings, o'er ye.

Wingèd creatures cleave the blue,

Clad in tints of sunny glory

That the cold west never knew—

And all these, like forms in madness,

To the lady seemed up-raised,

As her eye, in startled gladness,

On those dusky wanderers gazed.

For she said that, in her childhood,
She had crossed the Indian wave,
With the fairest of the fair ones,
And the bravest of the brave—

And the memory of her childhood,
And of all that blessed her then,
As she gazed upon the strangers,
Woke delightedly again !

So she spoke a kindly greeting,
In their own far eastern tongue ;
And they met like glad friends meeting,
Though a heartless crowd among !

There was wonder—there was laughter,
In that heartless, staring crowd,
As their low salaam and graceful
The poor wandering Hindoos bowed ;

But *their* hearts were far, far distant,
On some far bright eastern track ;
And the lady felt *her* childhood
With all its joys come back !

For the memory of its gladness,
And of all that blessed her then,
As she gazed upon those dusk ones,
Woke delightedly again.

“SILENT, THOU STERN REPROVER, BE !”

Silent, thou stern reprover, be !
Nor thus thy cold response renew—
“Pale fool ! and what is *Love* to *thee* ?
And what hast thou with *Love* to do ?”

For in my soul far other voice

I hear—it whispers sweetly still,

“ Is Love the flower of human *choice* ?

Is Love the growth of human *will* ? ”

The heart's wild passion-flower is not

A slavish shoot of common earth—

We cannot *choose* the culturing spot,

We cannot *will* its hour of birth :

A subtler spirit than our own

Plants and uproots, the wide world through :

Inscrutably the seed is sown—

Inscrutably it quickens too.

Chance verdure flies to far-off strands

On waves below and winds above ;

But in the heart, by angel hands,

Are dropped the sacred seeds of Love !

O'er *mine* no requiem Death shall chant !

Earth's perished flowers may deck my tomb,

But, in my soul, a deathless plant,

Immortally my Love shall bloom !

KÖRNER'S SISTER TO HER DEAD BROTHER.

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKART.

The sound of the battle-feast hath died,

And of Lutzow's hunt the far-off roar :

And thou, my Brother, once their pride,

Art hushed for evermore !

Gone are the sounds of the joyous chace,

As the sound of its horns the fields along.

Or linger but in silent grace

Reflected in thy song !

On thee, as with Valour's fiery rush
Thou rod'st to the battle's charging line,
Afar I gazed—'till the stormy gush
Of thy spirit rolled to mine!
And I heard thy name 'mid the patriot-band
Resound at the solemn festive board,
And all that thou for thy Fatherland
Had'st wrought with harp and sword!

As the star that brightest in heaven we see,
Grew then *thy* star to every other;
And who would not have died to be
Thy Sister, oh, my Brother!
But the deep night came, and the glory passed,
And I felt, when it ceased on thy soul to shine,
That the shadow of *fate fulfilled* was cast
For evermore on mine!

Ere yet, loved Hero ! I come to thee,
For ever to sleep with the gallant and true,
One only task remains for me
On the lonely earth to do.—
A trophied tomb, to our soul's desire,
Thou hast reared in thy own loved native land.
With the priceless gold of a Poet's lyre,
And the steel of a Patriot's brand !

Thou hast painted thy own loved image bright
With the breath of thy songs, brave, lovely, and true ;
And I, with an Artist's deathless might,
Will paint thee, my Brother, too !
I will paint thee as once all joyous and free,
Youth's morning-flush on thy fiery brow—
Or, as yet *more* lovely thou seemest to me,
In thy bed of glory now !

I will paint thee, my Brother ! trait for trait,
Till thou seem'st to the world's glad eye restored,
The Bard and the Hero who best could sway
His country's harp and sword !
Oh ! then, when my toil of love is o'er,
While the last of its tints are fresh and fair,
Set wide thy cold grave-chamber door,
For *me* to slumber there !

No bride had'st *thou* but the keen cold bride
To its bridegroom's hand so dear and true,
And *that* will not, with jealous pride,
Forbid *my* nuptials too !
No bride of a living love am I—
Or, oh ! how proudly would I resign
The proudest living breast, to lie
In the cold, cold grave on thine !

Thy name, on the pinions fleet and strong
 Of a deathless glory, the world shall see.
 And linked for ever with thy loved song
 This last of my Art's loved toils shall be !
 No heart for the *one* that hath reverence true,
 But will heap love and praise evermore on the *other* ;
 For thy Sister on earth became glorious too,
 When she painted her glorious Brother !

TO AN EXQUISITE SINGER.

" *Thou* honourest verse, and verse shall lend her wing
 To honour *thee*."

MILTON: *Sonnet to LAWES.*

O thou, with mastery o'er the willing breast
 Subtle and deep as e'er in fabled eld
 Breathed o'er the dancers through her golden hours.
 When lips unseen, at noon, or lovelier eve,

Or holier midnight, made, with charmèd pipe,
Vocal the dreaming woods and listening skies—
I know not where, in earth's most heavenly clime,
(All heaven and earth consenting to the spell!)
By what delicious fountain, or bright lake,
Beneath what haunted cavern of old name,
Or temple, dedicate to loveliest idol,
Or ivied ruin, or green canopy
Of wedded foliage, shadowing fairest nook
That ever sylvan solitude shut in,
Or immemorial forest islanded,
Or whatsoe'er divinest refuge else
To him who flies the world the world can yield—
I know not where e'en listening Fancy's self
Could image to the trancèd ear and heart
(Joy-tranced and passion-fed!) a spell-like voice
To cope in tender witchery with thine!

Thou hast unlocked, with thy delicious notes
(Evermore now to haunt me like sweet phantoms!)—

Thou hast unlocked the fountains of old joys,
Old hopes and fears, long iced by the world's breath ;
Joys that were but as other names for love,
And thoughts of love that kindled love in others—
Hopes more delicious from a dash of fear,
And fears made lovely with the glance of hope !
Never till now did I believe or dream
That Music, rapt enchantress as she is,
Could link to Poetry's eternal voice
Delight so pure—so worthy of her own.

“WANDERING IN YOUTH.”

A FRAGMENT.

Wandering in youth, I had a gentle dream—
Perchance “not all a dream.” Upon a rock
Whose shattered base the surge of ocean spurned
Foamingly back, I stood, beneath the jut

Of arch and column proudly perishing,
And the worn grandeur, venerably dim,
Of cloisters bared to the rude sea-wind's sweep :
There, Devastation, from his broken throne
Of vestiges and fragments, bearded o'er
With moss and weed, smiled grimly on the wreck,
The trampled relics of a fallen faith
Spread there their dust : the statuary's pride,
Hurled from its niche, lay mouldering into nought,
And scattered round me were the grass-grown mounds
That heave in last memorial of the dead,
Roofing their final chambers ;—These amidst,
I saw a Being couched upon the cold
And time-worn base of a sepulchral stone,
Gazing in solitude and silence there
Upon the rays of lovely light which streamed
Through chinks time-riven, and the shafted loops
Of that grey edifice. By fits, the winds,
The winds of dying Autumn, faint and sad,

Wailed through his tresses dark, and rustled oft
 The ivy and rank weeds that drooped around :
 And ever, from beneath, the deep dread voice
 Of Ocean, shattering his waves to spray
 Along the craggy marge of the dark strand,
 By tempests cleft and caverned, softened came,
 And poured wild music on the listener's ear.
 Sudden, with minstrel-ecstasy, he rose,
 As spirits rise in a majestic dream,
 And o'er the harp from earliest years beloved
 Threw his pale fingers hurriedly, and tones
 Of melancholy beauty died away
 Upon its strings of softness —

“AS THE CLOUDLETS OF EVE.”

A LYRIC.

As the cloudlets of eve, far-drifting,

When before the breeze they run—

As the hues of doves' necks shifting,

When they glance them to the sun—

As a bird for ever ranging—

As a stream that never rests,

Are the Passions (always changing !)

In our fickle human breasts !

While Love's fondest vow is breathing,

Colder grow the hearts that make it—

While Love's rosy chain is wreathing,

They that wreathe half strive to break it—

While the purest lips are praising,
 Whom they praise is half forgot —
While our very eyes are gazing,
 They behold whom they should not !

Alas that fearing, hating,
 Such a long, long life should know,
And that Love should seem abating
 Ere its rose is in full blow !
Well, oh ! well, may it be granted
 Love 's a flower of heavenly birth.
Since we find, however planted,
 'T is too delicate for earth !

But, oh, thou ! that, in betraying,
 (If thy love indeed betrays,)
'Tak'st my heart with thee a-maying
 O'er a thousand pleasant ways—

Thou that *seem'st* so true and tender,
So tender and so true—
Must my heart at last surrender
Even *thy* affections too?

" 'TIS NIGHT THAT BRINGS."

LYRIC.

Ever my spirit flies to thee,
From dawn to the folding-star—
But 't is night that brings thy image to me,
Brightest and loveliest far!
Fair is the morn when it freshly springs,
Like a fiery seraph on golden wings,
And scatters the clouds with its kingly ray,
And rolls the mists like visions away,
And walks in glory the brightening hills,
And valley and plain with beauty fills.

And gladdens all earth, and air, and sea—

Yes ! morn is fair,

But it cannot compare

With night, that brings thy image to me !

Ever my spirit flies to thee,

Ever to thine it clings !

But ’t is night that brings thy image to me,

As the bright day never brings !

I have a joy in the leafy June,

In the deep, deep hush of its fervid noon,

Alone to dream in the rustling shade

Of the high o’er-arching forest-glade.

Where the fountain leaps, and the deer, in their slim

And graceful beauty, couch by the brim,

Lulled by its gush, and the hum of the bee —

Yes ! noon is fair,

But it cannot compare

With night, that brings thy image to me !

Ever my spirit flies to thee,

To thee, afar, afar !

But 'tis night that brings thy image to me,

Bright as her own loved star !

I have a joy in the shadowy hour

Of twilight eve, in her autumn bower,

When, to one sweet bird, that darkling sings,

All heaven and earth seem listening things,

And tint by tint, and ray by ray,

Their spirit-like beauty melts away

Sweetly and softly as softly may be—

Yes ! eve is fair,

But it cannot compare

With night, that brings thy image to me !

“WHERE’S THE CHARM OF LOVING?”

“Ou est l’agrément d’amour?”

LA BRUYERE.

Where’s the charm of loving?

Where, oh! where, the sweetness

Once to time and nature

Gave such bloom and fleetness?

Where the bounding heart?

Where the lip’s wild greeting?

Hopes that soothed apart?

Joys that thrilled in meeting?

Long from withering doom

Other joys we cherish,

But with Love’s first bloom

All its bright hues perish!

Other dreams, other hopes, to the last may endure.

But the rose of a day is “l’agrément d’amour!”

Though the host be scattered,

Freedom yet may soar—

Though the harp be shattered,

Song may rise once more ;

Gems in caverns shaded

Heaven may re-illumine—

Flowers, awhile though faded,

Yet again shall bloom—

Branch and leaf, though sere,

Yet again shall quicken,

But no sap can rear

Love's sweet bud, once stricken !

All nature for storm and for blight hath a cure—

But no Spring comes to waken "l'agrément d'amour !"

Even in Passion's embers

Other joys can live—

What the heart remembers,

Still the heart can give.

All the joy of capture

Long the warrior feels—

All the poet’s rapture

Long his strain reveals!

But the heart’s best glory

Dies ere years have sprinkled

Even a tinge of hoary

O’er the brow unwrinkled:

Other barks, tempest-tossed, to the last may endure—

But no haven, no hope, for “l’agrément d’amour!”

1842.

THE TWO RINGS.

(FROM A STORY IN THE GESTA ROMANORUM.)

By fiction "truth severe" is taught.—

Tis said that in the days of old
Two rings by magic skill were wrought,
A monarch's fingers to enfold.

In strange artistic beauty done,
A mystic form on each was traced ;
Sullen OBLIVION darkened one,
And one divinest MEMORY graced.

A charmèd power these rings possessed,
Fatal or kind to him who wore ;
For on its wearer each impressed
The influence of the shape it bore—

Oh, wondrous rings! oh, blessed ones

For us poor pining men of letters!

To give of *one* kind to our *duns*,

And of the *other* to our *debtors*!

And sailors, too, who all their lives

Have tender hearts that always *meet* hearts,

Might give of one kind to their *wives*,

And of the other to their *sweethearts*!

Not so our king: across the wave

Departing from a dame unkind,

To *her* th' *oblivious* ring he gave,

And memory's to himself assigned.

Alas, the changes Time will bring!

Now, many a weary married elf

Would give his *spouse* the *thoughtful* ring,

And keep th' *oblivious* one himself!

For me—but let it be believed—

Of friendship, not of love, I write—

I, too, have given and received

These tokens of the heart's troth-plight ;

And think, *like* spells in *them* must be,

(To such hard thoughts at last we're driven)—

Memory in all bestowed on *me*,

Forgetfulness in all I've given.

“ALAS! THE WEARINESS OF LIFE!”

“Qu'il est difficile d'être content de quelqu'un!”

LA B'UYERE.

Alas! the weariness of life!

Its weary heights and weary hollows!

The weariness of toil and strife,

The weariness of calm that follows!

Alas! the weariness of seeing

The same dull objects o'er and o'er!

Alas! the weariness of being

From change to change dragged evermore!

Alas! the weariness of going

Day after day the same dull road!

Alas! the weariness of knowing

The labour is so ill bestowed!

Alas! the weariness of minding

Our weary, weary mortal brothers!

Alas! the weariness of finding

Ourselves as wearisome to others!

Alas! the weariness of steeling

Our hearts against our fellow-men!

Alas! the weariness of feeling

For those who nothing feel again!

Alas! the weariness of giving

Each sordid day due sordid heed!

Alas! the weariness of living

When Life so weary grows indeed!

Oh, HOPE! the star-light of the dreary!

The solace of the worn and grieving!

Of thee alone we never weary,

Nor thou of juggling and deceiving!

SONNETS.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR (ACCOMPANIED BY A FRIEND) THROUGH THE
LAKE SCENERY OF CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORELAND, 1836.

Scorn not the sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours. With this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from fairy-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

WORDSWORTH

I.

INVOCATION.

Yet once more, oh, ye mountains ! and once more,
Ye lakes and streams, deep glens, and valleys fair !
We drink the freshness of your gladsome air,
By sounding cataract or silent shore,
On pebbled marge, or shrubless summit hoar.
On verdant lea, or craggy headland bare :
Or, on your mirrored depths, the deep hush there
Gently dispel with gently-dipping oar.
How changed from the loud world ! No sound awakes
Louder or sterner than the gush of rills.
Oh, lovely forms ! for your majestic sakes,
Pure be each thought your loveliness instils.
Fresh as your fountains, lofty as your hills,
Deep, pure, and placid, as your glittering lakes !

II.

SOLITUDE.

Idly, perchance, have thousand poets dreamt
Of rapture in the Solitary's lot—
Of days of gentle peace in glen or grot,
Smooth-flowing ever, from life's storms exempt :
Yet, e'en to nurse such visions, false, or true,
Seems sprinkling o'er the heart a heavenly dew
And holy calm man's turbulent world hath not.
And, oh, enchantress Solitude ! thou art
Loveliest indeed in nature's lap, apart
From all that labour's sordid life recalls,
'Midst haunts like these, lakes, mountains, waterfalls,
To kindred eyes and hearts thus sweetly shown ;—
A *chamber's* vacant chairs and voiceless walls
Bid the lone inmate *grieve* to be alone !

III.

ULLSWATER LAKE.

“ Waters of Ulfo, stretched in triple fold,
Like a bright chain, your lovely banks between,
Thrice hath my wandering step your pilgrim been,
And still fresh grace and grandeur ye unfold !
No fairer hills uplift their brows of gold
In grateful glory to the orb they screen
From those who glide upon your breast serene,
Around each wooded promontory bold ! ”
These words my gladsome spirit voiced aloud
By Lyulph's Tower, while Aiery-Force replied ;
But, from Helvellyn's heights, a vapoury shroud,
E'en as I spoke, rolled threat'ning far and wide,
And drove us, 'midst fierce rains from cloud on cloud,
Darkling to Patterdale, in dreariest ride.

IV.

PASS OF KIRKSTONE.

Thrice, too, dread Kirkstone ! have I traversed thee ;
But, evermore, the heavens, with changeless scowl,
Like spectral monks that never lift the cowl,
Darkened above me, dark as Hate could be ;
Down-hurrying, like a maniac-thing set free,
Its turbid waters with their own rage foul,
Thy torrent thunders to the winds that howl
In wrath unbroke by pettiest shrub or tree !
The summit gained—if but a beam could scare
Yon driving vapours, as they boil and meet,
Earth's loveliest region might be proud to share
Our raptures lavished on the valley sweet,
Where Ambleside, the fairest of the fair,
Slumbers, like Beauty stretched at Terror's feet !

V.

WINANDERMERE.

If KATRINE be of SCOTIA'S lakes the queen,
Thee, oh, Winander! do *our* hearts embrace,
As, 'midst the fairest, holding fairest place,
A royal paragon in form and mien!
Thine is the pomp of sovereignty *serene*—
The powers that crown thee are a sylvan grace
And pastoral loveliness no eye can trace
In other realms, how bright soe'er the scene.
Traditionary light clothes not thy brow,
Nor in the strength of fiction art thou strong:
No "Lady of the Mere," with gliding prow
Over thy crystal, wafts her knight along.
In charms unborrowed or from tale or song.
In *natural loveliness* supreme art thou!

VI.

WINANDERMERE.

(CONTINUED.)

The gorgeous tide of amber glory rolled
Far o'er the western heavens when Phœbus takes
His farewell glance, and not a cloudlet breaks
The deep serene with e'en a ripple of gold,
Is not more deep and pure than we behold
On thy calm brow, oh, Queen of Albion's lakes!
Surely the rudest breath that o'er thee wakes
Broke never yet thy sweet sleep from of old!
Smiling delusion! which deludes not *us*,
For we, dear friend, once saw this bright expanse
Change, ere an oar twice dipped, from slumbering thus,
To billows lashed by storm-winds loud and keen;
And, but for holier, mightier powers than *chance*,
Deep in its soundless depths our graves had been!

VII.

WINANDERMERE

NIGHT-FALL.

Now Beauty and deep Stillness, with the veil
Of slow-descending Night soft-mantled o'er,
Upon the waveless lake and dreamlike shore
Their tenderest hour of bridal meeting hail :
We catch not e'en the rustle of a sail,
Nor the least "drip of a suspended oar."
Hark! now there comes a sound of life once more,
And, strange to tell, it comes like wail on wail,
And scream on scream, as if from sufferers dying
In tortures infinite! mingled with the yells
Of gathering fiends exultingly replying,
As, far away, each note of anguish swells!
Vain trick of fancy! they are *night-owls*, crying
Each unto each, amid the crags and fells.

VIII.

WINANDERMERE.

NIGHT.—CLOUDS.—MOONLIGHT.—RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LADY IN COMUS.

Were we deceived? "Or did a sable cloud
Turn forth its silver lining on the night?"
Oh, thou immortal one! to whom the might
Of sorcery and ribald passion bowed,
When Circe's monster-son, abashed and cowed,
Quailed from thy glance of pure indignant light!
How hath a casual vapour in its flight
Set thee before us, Virgin heavenly-browed!
Eternal blessings on the sacred Muse,
And every flash of her diviner mirth!
There's not an aspect now in heaven or earth
But takes for *us* Imagination's hues,
And hath a solemn privilege to infuse
Memory afresh of things of holiest worth.

IX.

WINANDERMERE.

A VOICE SINGING.

Even as rose that lady's voice divine
From the dark woods, in "many a winding bout"
Of harmony that hushed the savage rout
Of Comus, "flown with insolence and wine,"
So rose, methought, and hushed the night-birds, *thine*,
Dear friend, "in linkèd sweetness long drawn out,"
Until the listening heavens and earth might doubt
If mortal notes so sweetly could combine !
Or as on Dante's ear the solemn chant
Of Beatrice arose, soft, heavenly-mellow,
After the howls obscene of Rubicant,
And Graffiaccane fierce, and Farfarello,
That e'en majestic Virgil's soul could daunt,
Heard through Malbolge's hideous depths to bellow !

X.

LANGDALE.

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever”—
And, oh! the beauty that at times will cross
Our random paths, with such rich natural gloss,
And gracefulness, and symmetry, that never
Can boastful Art, with her most strained endeavour,
Rival their hues, or recompense their loss!
E'en so, in Langdale, gleamed a *clump of moss*,
No lapse of years from memory shall sever;
No seat by oriental tyrants pressed,
No footstool by their proud sultanas trod,
Could match the emerald glories of that sod
Stretched for the poorest, humblest traveller's rest;
Fresh from the hands of Nature and of God;
Proffering meek tribute to the wren's low nest.

XI.

DUNGEON-GHYLL.

Aptly enough was this deep cavern named ;
Where, prisoned by the wild rock's living wall,
Sheer downward leaps the ever-foaming Fall,
Like to a wild beast caged, but never tamed ;
Darker retreat was never hewn or framed
For ghostly penitent or fettered thrall,
On God or man, angel or fiend, to call,
Self-tortured, or of heaven and earth disclaimed.
Vain simile ! yon vast o'er-hanging block,
Darkening the wild rent with its poise of fear,
Is the sole captive ever prisoned here,
Save one, a bleating straggler of the flock,
That, sporting on the green brow of the rock,
Deep-plunged, and perished in this dungeon drear.

XII.

BLEA TARN.

In lonely Langdale is a dreary spot,
Round the bleak marge of Blea's voiceless tarn.
There trace of man is none—fold, sheep-cot, barn,
Nor loneliest mountaineer's most lonely cot :
More savage and more desolate are not
The wild sea-rocks of Scilly or of Farn.
There silence sits, deathlike, as in a cairn
Mouldering upon a wilderness forgot :
There was an awfulness in heaven and earth,
When there we gazed, which well, methought, might
tame
In youth's wild heart the wildest pulse of mirth,
And hold it breathless e'en for very shame—
A retributive blight, a penal dearth—
Record of crimes too dreadful for a name !

XIII.

BASE OF SCAWFELL.—DRUIDICAL CIRCLE.

More awful yet, and with a heavier strain
On mind and heart, by the drear upland swell,
From Eskdale, of thy mighty base, Scawfell !
Are those grey circling fragments that remain,
Like worn links dropped from Time's memorial chain,
Of forms accursed and hideous rites to tell,
Ere purer faith rang superstition's knell,
And hush'd the cry of human victims slain.
How God, in mercy, to oblivion dooms
All but the *wreck* of all man's pride hath dared !
How violated Nature re-assumes
Her trampled laws and sanctities impaired !
The temples of old Faiths become their *tombs*,
For awful meditation only spared.

XIV.

BASE OF SCAWFELL.

(CONTINUED.)

Yes! it was awful, dearest friend, when thou
And I, lone-wandering 'midst those relics old,
Saw timeless night upon the mid-day wold
Rush down in clouds from the lost mountain's brow,
Darker, perchance, than memory paints them now,
Volumed and vast, in ceaseless surges rolled.
It was a sight *so* awful to behold,
Our very hearts in reverence seemed to bow.
Silent we stood—*how* silent! and with gaze
How fixed and solemn on that mystic zone
Of shapeless shapes around us dimly shown,
Like spectral things of long-departed days!
It was, methought, as if, with drear amaze,
Ourselves were turning to sepulchral stone!

XV.

THE RISING OF THE MIST.

Then, O the change! the rich, the lovely light!
The placid splendour, and the meek repose!
The dream, the glory! the etherial shows
Of earthly things, with tints unearthly bright!
When that wild drapery of gloom and blight
Sudden before us like a curtain rose—
As if by angels lifted, to disclose
In what pure realms their stainless steps alight!
Our spirits sprang, like eagles from their cage,
To wing that region so divinely shown,
Where, as it seemed, all sorrow, and all rage,
And hate, and fear, and falsehood, were unknown,
“And God performed, upon the ‘lovely’ stage
Of his own works, his ‘heavenly’ part alone!”

XVI.

THE RIVER DUDDON.

NIGHT.—EXHAUSTION.

When we beheld thee, Duddon!—(if our eyes
Indeed could boast that triumph, classic stream!
The dubious glancing of some rippled gleam
Alone redeeming us from blank surmise,
So darkly on the mountains and the skies
Hung the deep midnight!)—did our spirits seem
Fed by thine inspiration with “clear dream
And solemn vision?” Hark, how each replies!
Oh, gentle brook! half smiling and half sad,
Let Memory own how Fancy quailed and shrank,
When by thy hurrying wave we stooped and drank,
With toil half prostrate, and with thirst half mad!—
To scoop the brimming waters from thy bank
Was all the thought of thee or thine we had!

XVII

LANGDALE PIKE.—WRYNOSE.—HARDKNOT.

From craggy Langdale's topmost peak, delighted,
Morn had beheld us gazing far away
Over the mountain-world beneath that lay
Far stretched, and many a lingering gaze invited.
Oh, happy toils ! deliciously requited,
If timely closed with timely-closing day !
But ere we reached those relics lone and grey
That mark where Rome's proud eagle once alighted
On dreary Hardknot, Fortune (fickle-sprighted,
Whether in town or wilderness she dwell)
Threw us, outworn, bewildered, and benighted,
On the bleak brow of that most savage fell,
Where not the keen glance of the most keen-sighted
The path of man from sheep-track dim could tell.

XVIII.

DESCENT INTO ESKDALE.

UTTER EXHAUSTION.

How cheerily, to run how blithe a race,
From stream to stream, from glittering crag to crag,
Sprang we at dawn, like hunters of the stag
Flushed with the fiery rapture of the chace !
How drearily, and with how slow a pace,
Like baffled hounds in mid-career that flag,
Downwards to Esk's sweet valley did we drag,
Counting each footfall of the weary space !
“ 'Twas pretty, though a plague,” dear Ernest, when
By the green lustre of the glow-worm's spark,
We paused a moment, faintingly, to mark
How far or near was grey-eyed dawning then—
Dawn that awakes the shepherd and the lark,
And shows, though far away, *some* haunt of men.

XIX.

ESKDALE.—THE WOOLPACK.

REST.

Joy to the Woolpack! joy to thee, lone inn!
Solace of those the lovely vale who tread
Where Esk runs dimpling o'er his shallow bed,
That scarce would dip an infant to the chin!
Oh, with what joy thy low porch did we win,
And bless the path that to its threshold led,
And knock, and knock, as to awake the dead.
Startling thy sleepers with our timeless din!
Joy to thy merry host, our mountain guide,
Broad-shouldered VICKARS with the sinewy back!
A wrestler who had tamed a Milo's pride,
And made his classic sinews strain and crack.
Christopher North his name hath glorified
In prose, and, *now*, sweet verse he shall not lack.

XX.

ESKDALE.

Sweet vale of Esk ! o'erclouded as thou art,
A vapoury ocean's silent surges curled
Around the giant heights that from the world
Shut thee in loveliest solitude apart,
Though not a beam through those black banners dart
Along thy mountain-battlements unfurled,
As if by thousand tempests thither whirled,
Still, far below, we tread thee with glad heart—
Hearts glad, though thoughtful ; joyous, though sedate ;
As if the Genius of thy hurrying stream,
Along its shattered course ("unblessed by beam")
Leaping with self-fed cheerfulness elate,
Of like calm cheer, beneath all clouds of Fate,
Sang to us like the sweet voice of a dream !

XXI.

THE RIVER ESK.

Here let us sit upon its granite marge,
The far-off world forgetting as we may,
While cloud on cloud still menaces delay—
Captives, but, oh ! how joyously at large !
Yon lily, meet to be Titania's barge,
Floats tremulously stirred with the pure spray
Of thy glad waters as they dance away,
Gemmed like a fairy champion's diamond targe.
How bright thy bordering mosses, flowers, and fern !
The spiry fox-glove, with its graceful bells
Of loveliest purple, nods at every turn,
With every breeze that sighs adown the fells.
O say, sweet stream, to hearts that fain would learn,
If not by *thee*, *where* rustic virtue dwells ?

XXII.

ESKDALE.

DEPARTURE.

A shade of sadness dims the parting glance
E'en when we leave but "mute insensate things,"
When none the severing hand in kindness wrings,
Or bids good angels bless us from mischance.
Valley! along whose peaceful windings dance
Esk and her joyous tributary springs,
To thee, to them, to every crag that flings
Its shadow o'er ye, like a deep thought's trance,
And to thy few low homes, a long farewell!
We go—but *thou* shalt be a treasured spot,
Thou, and thy every mountain-nook and dell.
Man's busy world and worldly heart shall not
Tear thee from ours with their most worldly spell—
Be Stanley-Ghill and Dalegarth-Force forgot
When memory loathes on loveliness to dwell!

XXIII.

DALEGARTH FORCE.

How like a queen in exile dost thou show,
Beautiful DALEGARTH ! holding, queenly still,
The sole, sweet sov'ranty of Stanley-Ghill,
With pomp of torrents poured in regal flow.
Never the herd of common wanderers go
Where, headlong bounding at their own glad will,
Thy volumed waters shake the wooded hill
Like Cyclopean thunders, blow on blow !
No common voice disturbs, or steps profane,
Thy grandeur lone and loveliness obscure.
E'en as a poet art thou, who doth pour
Upon the desert winds a solemn strain,
By man unheard, yet uttered not in vain,
Of God and Nature's listening ear secure !

XXIV.

MARGIN OF WAST-WATER.

On thy lone marge, oh, loneliest of lakes !
At length we stand—and what a change appears !
Methinks no flower thy sullen bank e'er cheers,
Or voice of merry bird thy morn awakes.
By Esthwaite, Rydal, Grasmere, Nature makes
Sweet solace for *all* hearts, in smiles or tears :
Winander is the gentlest of all meres,
And pastoral Derwent of all moods partakes ;
But *thou*, most desolate and deserted WAST !
Black with the shadows of thy guardian Serees—
Nothing in *thy* dark mirror Fancy sees
But drowning hopes, hearts wrecked, and pleasures lost ;
As if a dirge still loaded thy sad breeze,
And wan Despair alone thy waters crossed !

XXV.

ASCENT OF SCAWFELL PIKE.

To climb a steepy mountain is to draw
(If hearts be made of meditative stuff,)
From toil, and peril, and adventure rough,
Full many a maxim keen and truthful saw :
And thus, upon thy ridgy side, dark SCAW !
We held Ambition perilous enough,
And Fortune slippery ; and each rebuff
In life compared to some stern thing we saw.
We thought of POWER, grown dizzy ere it bask
Safely aloft ; of storms that HATE may send ;
Of summer-clouds, and winter-drifts, that mask
Chasms where PRIDE may find a dismal end ;
And that, whate'er may be the *upward* task,
'T is even yet more dreadful to *descend* !

XXVI.

ASCENT OF SCAWFELL PIKE.

(CONTINUED.)

“ Upwards and upwards ! ” Such is still the cry
In the loud world, as here ; Jews, Christians, Turks—
In each, in all, the latent fever lurks—
In things that creep, and prouder things that fly.
“ Upwards and upwards ! ” All beneath the sky—
Your kings, your bards, your Foxes, and your Burkes !
“ *To see how God in all his creatures works !*
Yea ! men and birds are fain of climbing high ! ”
These, then, our mountain-climbings, with intent
First to attain yon far-off peak who can,
To gaze at once o’er half a realm’s extent,
And see whole counties dwindled to a span,
Are but as symbols of the whole world’s bent,
And types of the ambitious heart of man !

XXVII.

SCAWFELL PIKE.

THE SUMMIT GAINED.

“ *Nous avons vaincu le Mont Blanc !* ”— Such cry
Bursts from *their* lip who scale with victor-wing
The awful brow of Europe’s mountain-king,
And see, beneath, her every empire lie !
Such, though on plumes less proudly tasked we fly,
And own “ our British Alp ” a humbler thing—
Such chant of triumph *we*, too, dared to fling,
From his sharp peak, aloud to earth and sky.
For, oh ! the mighty chart that did unfold
Itself beneath us ! Heaved in craggy surges,
A mountainous ocean from the Cheviots rolled
Far south and west, to where dim Cambria verges
On Ocean’s self, trembling like vapoury gold,
Whence glittering MoNA, like a dream, emerges.

XXVIII.

SCAWFELL PIKE.

THE SUMMIT GAINED.

(CONTINUED.)

Well might we gaze, for what a view from thence !
Bow-FELL, huge-swelling, met us face to face ;
And vast GREAT GAVEL, sheer from brow to base,
Rushed down precipitous, a curve immense ;
There stretched the SCREES, drear Wastdale's craggy
fence,
And Grasmere there, and Cromach, did we trace :
And the dark hills that Emmerdale embrace,
Quivering through ether blue, with heat intense.
For not a cloud the burning heavens obscured,
And not a breeze or breath in the fierce sky
Soothed the intolerable glare that poured
On fevered brow, parched lip, and straining eye—
Dread splendour ! that o'erpowered while it allured,
And pregnant soon with cause for many a sigh !

XXIX.

SCAWFELL PIKE.

THE DESCENT.

Down-hurrying from thy peak, oh, sov'ran SCAW !
A wild, and lone, and long, long course we traced,
Where silence and magnificence embraced,
And solitude, and loveliness, and awe.
How dreadful there to brook the winter's flaw
And driving snows, thick-drifting o'er the waste !
But, oh ! the glorious vision (as we paced
Vast GAVEL's ridge) delighted Fancy saw !
The glittering tops of other hills for miles
Rolled like the discs of other worlds away—
“ Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,”
Like those on Mirzah's “ shining seas ” that lay !
Methought 't was ours (how sweetly thought beguiles !)
Midst some far planet's wandering moons to stray !

XXX.

BUTTERMERE.

Beautiful region ! Thou that erst bestowed
A name on beauty, when thy MARY's cheek
Sparkled with loveliness as pure and meek
As e'er upon thy lake's deep mirror glowed !
How faintly to the inn, once *her* abode,
Drew we at night-fall, rest and food to seek,
After long wandering o'er the mountains bleak,
And down drear Honister's distressful road !
The breathless night had noon-day's parching air—
Through the hushed valley not a wandering breeze.
But, with the dawning, what a change was there !
Even as whirlwinds tear the sands and seas,
A tempest seemed the eternal hills to tear,
From RED PIKE echoing to the far-off SCREES !

XXXI.

BUTTERMERE: TO E. G.

THE PENALTY: FEVER.

As one who views a Paradise laid waste,
E'en in an instant, by Destruction's hand,
A funeral-train succeed a bridal-band,
And bridal-joy by funeral-wailings chased—
With like revulsion *we* beheld effaced
On that dread morn (like characters from sand)
The scheme of joy our mutual hearts had planned,
And melt to the thin air on which 't was based !
Roused by the crashing thunderbolt, oh ! how
Sorrow and fear o'erwhelmed me to behold
A storm of fever raging on thy brow
More dreadful than the storm without that rolled !
Alas ! dear friend, methinks I see thee now,
And hear thy tale of that night's horrors told !

XXXII.

BUTTERMERE.

THE PENALTY: FEVER.

(CONTINUED.)

The live-long night, on thy distracted ear
The ceaseless roar of fancied torrents preyed ;
Each fevered sense delirious Fancy made
Her slave and victim through those hours of fear.
Now, dragging up steep rocks, with toil severe,
Interminable heights thy steps essayed :
Then, far, far down, by cleft or ledge unstayed,
Plunged in black gulphs, o'er precipices sheer !
So, on its wings of terror, fled the night.
But, with the day-beam, horror took fresh range :
Phantoms *more* hideous pouring on the sight—
More wildly and fantastically strange.
O God ! the dread—the anguish of such change
To hearts so lately throbbing with delight !

XXXIII.

BUTTERMERE.

RECOVERY.

Hail to the mountains—to the lakes—the skies—
The woods—the streams—and wild-flow'rs sweetly coy !
If sorrow deepens trebly after joy,
Joy is thrice joyous after sorrow dies ;
And lovelier seems all loveliness to eyes
Long in dim chambers tasked with drear employ.
To watch those sickly shadows that destroy
All placid cheer where sleepless sickness lies.
O dearest friend ! no fairer sight hath been
To mine vouchsafed than that which now they view,
Health kindling on thy brow and cheek anew,
And hope fresh-springing with delighted mien !
Brightening the earth with more delicious green,
And the blue heavens with more delicious blue !

XXXIV.

LOWES WATER.—CROMACH.

All lovely things, though after lovelier seen,
And with an eye those lovelier things have sated,
Claim with their brighter brethren to be mated
In the heart's register of what hath been.
Sweet Lowes and Cromach ! on your breasts serene
How joyously our little boat was freighted,
When, though with joy more thoughtful than elated,
Gently we rowed, and praised your lovely mien !
Less haughtily the bordering mountains soar,
Whose shadows sleep upon each bright expanse :
And, as we steal along the silent shore,
Where thousand wild-flowers in the soft breeze dance,
The measured dash and drip of the light oar
Are the sole sounds that break the solemn trance.

XXXV.

SCALE-FORCE.

No ! on the breeze there comes a murmur hoarse.
By Cromach, in a cleft of mountain-walls,
Whose gloom and terror fancy yet recalls,
As fittest haunt for agonized Remorse,
Sheer falls thy sullen cataract, SCALE-FORCE !
Not as a victor, whose career appals,
But one, the mightiest, of the victor's thralls.
Writhing and wrestling down, in frantic course.
Niagara boasts not so profound a leap
As thou, dread SCALE, adown thy cavern hoar !
But where the mighty rush, the volumed sweep,
The dizzying terror, the distracting roar,
Startling a hundred forests from their sleep,
And shaking a vast realm from shore to shore ?

XXXVI.

SCALE-FORCE.

(CONTINUED.)

Return, invidious Fancy ! nor compare
Things far apart by sov'ran Nature placed,
And each with powers and charms *distinctive* graced,
That others share not, nor have need to share.
"Twixt *kindred* paragons the strife is fair,
Kindred fertility, or kindred waste ;
But from each gentle bosom be effaced
Thoughts that would wrong e'en Desolation bare ;
And for the sake of all that Time hath spared,
Or, haply, given more venerated power,
(When Beauty hallows what his scythe impaired,)
Be thy least praise, dark torrent, only shared
With that dim-heard at eve by Lyulph's Tower,
Or Dalegarth, rich in Beauty's richest dower !

XXXVII.

THE VALE OF LORTON.

How all things heighten all things by compare !
And each o'er each some freshening power distils !
From the low vales more awful look the hills,
And from the hills the vales are doubly fair ;
The torrent, thundering from its mountain-lair,
Softens the gurgling of the gentle rills,
And they, low-chanting "at their own sweet wills,"
Deepen the cataract's roar in middle air ;
The gloom, where rocks in hideous juttings bow,
In caves, or glens, and rayless niches, cast,
Gives to the sunny plain and green hill's brow
A brilliance lovelier than their own at last :
And thus, sweet pastoral LORTON, even thou
Art lovelier for the wild scenes we have passed.

XXXVIII.

VALLEY OF SAINT JOHN.

THE CASTLE ROCKS.

Valley, from the beloved Apostle named,
Dear art thou to the Poet and the Lover,
Though never more shall mortal glance discover
The mystic battlements, by Merlin framed,
Where brave DE VAUX the might of magic tamed,
And clasped his dear one when the spell was over.
Now, upon shapeless rocks the wren and plover
Perch free, and Nature hath her own reclaimed.
Nothing—though gazing long, with eyes that fain
And gladly would be cheated—nothing there
Saw we of that dread citadel remain,
Bastion, or parapet, or turret fair.
Enough for us, through driving mist and rain,
To build our own dim castles in the air!

XXXIX.

VALLEY OF SAINT JOHN.

FAITH IN TRADITION.

All life and nature, in man's primal day,
Were Poetry and Fancy's own domain.
With spiritual presence thronged amain,
Earth, air, and sea, were vocal: hoar Decay
And glittering Youth alike through twilight grey
Saw shapes and "looks that threatened the profane:"
Each subtle coinage of the credulous brain
Took bodily form and held a mystic sway.
Who *now*, believingly, his steps will drag,
This valley's charmèd battlements to scale?
Who *now* beholds, at eve, or dawning pale,
That woman old "lone-seated on Helm-Crag?"
Or, midst the yew-trees, "pride of Lorton Vale,"
Eve, noon, or morn, sees elfin, ghost, or hag?

XI..

VALLEY OF SAINT JOHN.

Esk, Lorton, Newlands, beautiful are ye !
A triple league of loveliness ! where all
That holds the gentle mind in gentlest thrall
Lavished with prodigal delight we see !
But thou, St. John ! a mightier name shall be.
Long as thy storied legends we recall—
Long as tradition can delight, appall—
Long as Helvellyn rears his throne in thee !
For not alone by song made hallowed ground,
(Song that can hallow e'en the bleakest clod,)
Thou, in "indenture tripartite," art bound
With sisters lovely both to man and God—
Grasmere serene, and RYDAL, laurel-crowned,
Alike by virtue and by gemins trod !

XLI.

RYDAL.—WORDSWORTH.

Shame to the Poet—to the *man*—who here,
Wandering with heart “at leisure to be good,”
Departs without a thought that he hath stood
On ground to heaven, man, virtue, nature, dear!
There is a little low-roofed cottage near,
Dropped like a nest amidst yon circling wood,
The which, did *all* hearts venerate as they should.
The wide earth as a temple would revere.
Once did I tread that spot of favoured ground.
Led e’en by *Him*, whom so to hear and see
Was to my heart as priceless treasure found—
By WORDSWORTH led. How fresh in age was he!
Hair snowy white, but step of agile bound,
Amidst his own “Rydalian laurels” free!

· XLII.

DERWENT WATER.

For every mood of life, since life began,
Nature hath sympathies, and answering forms :
Our joys and sorrows, and *her* calms and storms
Are parts accordant of one mighty plan.
All things that are, if patiently we scan—
The shade that chills us, and the sun that warms,
All that exalts, delights, degrades, deforms—
Are types congenial of the heart of man.
Thus did we think as cloud on cloud came o'er
Thy banks, oh, Derwent ! and the summit hoar
Of Glaramara blotted from the sun ;
And hoarser grew the murmurs of Lodore,
As if prophetic of the doom of one
Far-honoured dweller by thy winding shore !

XLIII.

SOUTHEY.

A cloud hath settled o'er *his* living head
No intellectual beam shall ever quell,
Until the dread Archangel's trumpet-swell
Tear the wide realms and regions of the dead !
Alas ! how little did I dream or dread,
When *he*, too, welcomed me with voice that fell
On ear and heart like a melodious spell,
That *there*, e'en *there*, God's shaft would soon be sped !
With glance as calm and gentle as his tone,
And placid paleness upon brow and cheek,
Where were the troubled flashes to bespeak
“ *Wild* Southey, flying, like the heron, alone ? ”
He rose—he moved—he spoke—a thing as *meek*
As ever bowed before the Eternal Throne.

XLIV.

FAREWELL TO THE LAKES.

Farewell, sweet scenes ! how much remains unsung
Of your bright mirrors and their mountain shores,
A spirit not ungratefully deplores
That fain would linger your loved haunts among,
Delightedly, as ever Fancy clung
To fairy wilds or legendary stores !
Still on my ear your every torrent roars,
Your every brook's low murmur still is flung !
But, Powers that look not lovingly on you,
Nor on the love for you that others feel,
Of mute departure ring the unwelcome peal,
Or force from sighing lips a long adieu !
Oh, Time ! ordained alike to wound and heal,
Will e'er thy lapse these lovely hours renew ?

XLV.

FAREWELL TO THE LAKES.

(CONTINUED.)

"The world is too much with us : late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away—a sordid boon!"

WORDSWORTH.

As one who closes a delightful book
For sullen tasks that weary and annoy,
My spirit turns from this her loved employ,
At the stern world's cold summons and rebuke.
But *thou*, dear friend! at least, with joy wilt look
On these faint records of our mutual joy,
Though dashed with one sad interval's alloy,
When sickness chained thee in our mountain nook.
Not "too much with us" *then* the world could be :
Glimpses we had that "made us less forlorn ;"
We saw "old Proteus rising from the sea"—
We heard "old Triton blow his wreathèd horn"—
We chased the Oreades on hill and lea—
We "filched from careless Amalthea's horn!"

XLVI.

FAREWELL TO THE LAKES.

(CONCLUSION.)

All bright and fair things moved us "late and soon;"
Pure thoughts and good from all our spirits won;
A more majestic glory robed the sun;
A more pathetic radiance filled the moon;
Never for nature were we "out of tune."
Never her gentle promptings did we shun;
Harsh thought, or stern, or sensual, had we none;
We gave our hearts away—"no sordid boon!"
Oh, lovely scenes! lake, mountain, torrent, glen!
Warm, pure, and deep, these farewell tributes flow
From hearts that yet have never ceased to glow
With kindred yearning to their fellow-men;
Though sadly now from you to them we go,
And sigh to tread their busy world again!

THE MOUNTAIN CHILD.

[The following poem records the fate of a child in the Isle of Man—a boy, scarcely eight years old, who perished one stormy night upon the CLUGHREE Mountain, in one of those fearful mists which the writer has often seen rolling down like an ocean from the yet higher tops of Snafeld and Barrule. He had wandered, unfortunately, from his father's side in the evening, and was found dead next morning under the mountain-wall.]

I.

As we roam along this mountain wild,
Hark to my song of a mountain child !
No carol or ditty of blithesome breath,
But a low sad chant of sorrow and death !
A song for the cottage maiden's tear,
When she hears the night-winds whistling drear—
A song for the passing traveller's sigh,
When he hears the tempest gathering nigh,

And the mists from Barrule and Snafeld's brow
Roll like a sea, as they 're rolling now ;
And he scarce may catch on the mountain wild
A glimpse of the home of the MOUNTAIN CHILD.

II.

Where'er on English ground I roam,
I love to gaze on a cottage home—
With its pastoral grace, and its rustic air,
And its clear white wall, and its garden fair,
And the thin blue smoke on the upland breeze
Gracefully curled o'er the sheltering trees ;
And the door where trellising woodbine creeps ;
And the lattice where many a tall rose peeps
Through its small bright panes that the sunset gilds.
Beneath the eaves where the swallow builds ;
And the meadow where all is verdant and mild—
Was *such* the home of the MOUNTAIN CHILD?

III.

Look on the bleak, lone, comfortless cot !
Toil and penury mark the spot !
Bare, and shelterless, savage, and drear,
Nor shrub nor flow'ret blossoming near ;
The roof is sod, and the walls are mud,
Half-washed down by the winter flood ;
And through many a ruined cranny and rift
The fierce rains dash, and the bleak snows drift.
What, oh ! what, should inhabit there ?
Beasts of the field, or fowls of the air ?
All is desolate, stormy, and wild—
Such is the home of the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

IV.

When the winter winds are whistling shrill,
Heap up the bright coal-fire as ye will,
And spread ye the festal board beside
With the generous cheer of Christmas-tide,

And sip the red wine as it laughs in the rays
Through the crystal shot by the ruddy blaze ;
And wrap ye in luxury's fleecy fold
From the biting tooth of the keen sharp cold ;—
E'en *then*, from the shuttered and curtained panes
One breath will send a chill through your veins !
Oh, what, in the hut of the shelterless wild,
Can warm the veins of the MOUNTAIN CHILD ?

v.

Dearer than raiment of purple and gold,
Is *fire* to the wretch who trembles with cold ;
Dearer than feasting is fuel to him
Who feels the sharp winter in every limb ;
Happy sleeps *he*, though but stretched on a rug,
Where the deep dark mines of coal are dug ;
Happy is *he* whose lone hut stands
Where the forest yields him its crackling brands ;
Happy is *he* with a morsel of bread,
Whose hands to a cheerful blaze are spread ;

Oh, what, and where, on the mountain wild,
Is the fuel that warms the MOUNTAIN CHILD ?

VI.

God hath spread for the mountain child
Fuel all o'er the mountain wild ;
Where earth's bituminous treasures rest,
Far, far down in her fathomless breast,
And there waves not above one tree to throw
A withered twig down when tempests' blow.
Climb but the CLUGHREE'S topmost fence,
Fuel is there for the gathering thence :
And he of whom I chant my rhyme,
Loved with his sturdy sire to climb,
To cut the dark turf on the mountain wild—
Such was the joy of the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

VII.

It was stormy December's stormiest day ;
The waves were roaring in Laxey Bay,

And the loud winds—louder never than then—
Howled like demons o'er Laxey Glen ;
But louder and fiercer, if fiercer might be,
They swept the heights of the dark CLUGHREE ;
And the mists from Barrule and Snafeld's brow
Rolled like a sea, as they're rolling now ;
And nothing with life would brave the sky,
Save the toiling poor, who must toil or die !
Yet, away, away, up the mountain wild,
Through storm and cloud, sped the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

VIII.

What reaked *he* that the black mists rolled
Blacker along the storm-swept wold ?
What reaked *he* that his scanty vest
Bared to the blast his shivering breast ?
What reaked *he*, as he panted on,
That the brief dark day was well nigh gone ?
Oft before, like a bird set free,

He had sped to his sire on the wild Clughree,
Playfully busy to aid, the while,
The peat to cut, and the stack to pile ;
For the mountaineer, though rugged and wild,
Was dear to the heart of his MOUNTAIN CHILD !

IX.

That rugged sire was gentle to *him*—
And away, with straining breath and limb,
Away, away, like a bird set free,
Hurries the boy up the wild Clughree.
Why does he tarry in mid career ?
Does he flag with toil ? or droop with fear ?
Does he cower from the blast, as fiercer it blows ?
Or the night, as darker and nearer it grows ?
No !—half like a chiding, and half like a wail,
A voice seems loading the stormy gale,
And he thinks he hears, far-sweeping the wild,
His mother's lament for her MOUNTAIN CHILD !

x.

O ! louder and wilder at night was sent
To the deaf, dark heaven that mother's lament !
And louder and wilder the father's groan
When he entered his desolate cabin *alone* !
And hurried around in vain to greet
The child he had met not, and never should meet !
Desolate parents ! how did they brook
Each in the other's wild eye to look ?
Each, with the quick, wild glance of despair,
Asking and answering, " Where, oh ! where ?"
Oh ! frantic, and far, and fruitless, and wild,
Was the long, long search for the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

xi.

Never again alive did they see
Their dark-haired boy on the wild Clughree—
Never again did his sweet glad voice
The desolate parents' hearts rejoice—

Never again, for the lone hut's fire,
Did he toil in sport with his toiling sire,
And, playfully busy, help, the while,
The peat to cut, and the stack to pile.
When the dim morn oped its cold grey eye,
Misty and pale through the storm-swept sky,
And the dull beam crept o'er the mountain wild,
There lay the corse of the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

XII.

How long, how long, with the tempest's wrath
Did the lost one strive on his darkened path !
How oft did he call, on the bleak hill's side,
And scream with terror when none replied !
And shriek for those who never should hear,
Till Hope grew sick in the grasp of Fear !
And his young heart's strength in its agony quailed,
And his young blood froze, and his young limbs failed !
Alas ! he had known nor terror nor tears—

And his was the strength of but twice four years—
And, long ere the tempest was hush'd on the wild,
Cold and low lay the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

XIII.

In the far Kirk Lonan's earth they made
The low cold bed where his ashes are laid :
But ever, 't is whispered, when night, and cloud,
And storm, are gathering dark and loud,
On the bleak bare top of the wild Clughree
That child the traveller yet may see !
Gaze but e'en now with a trusting eye,
And you 'll see the dim form hurrying by !
List but e'en now with a trusting ear,
And his shrill sad wail on the blast you 'll hear !
Such are the tales of the mountain wild—
Such was the fate of the MOUNTAIN CHILD !

SABBATH SILENCE.

[Composed in the early stillness of a calm and beautiful Sunday morning.]

I.

If there was nought beside to say
How sacred is the Sabbath-day—
If there was nought beside to tell
That God and Nature love it well,
Methinks this deep and solemn calm,
That melts into the heart like balm,
And stills the waves of troubled thought
In weary bosoms overwrought—
This lovely sleep of earth and air,
Above, around, and everywhere—
This rest of a whole world from care,

And eager strife, and sordid toil,
And all the passions' vain turmoil—
This holy peacefulness, which seems
Like the pure calm of angels' dreams,
When Heaven's delicious evening sheds
Its glorious twilight o'er their heads ;—
Methinks, e'en these might sweetly say,
In bosoms framed of thoughtful clay,
'T is God hath sent the Sabbath-day !—

II.

I've wandered lonely, late and soon,
At silent eve, and morn, and noon—
I've wandered lonely, far and near,
O'er verdant plains, and moorlands drear,
O'er wide and solitary hills,
Where, save the voice of hidden rills,
And a low breeze that seemed to know
Its murmurs *should* be faint and low,

Or the far bleat of some poor lamb,
Chance-straggled from the sorrowing dam,
Or feebler note of some lone bird,
No sound in heaven or earth was heard.

III.

I 've sat alone in leafy dells,
Where Solitude, the hermit, dwells,
Mid some dim ruin's desolation,
With the hushed seraph, Contemplation ;
Where jutting cliffs that meet on high
Scarce yield a glimpse of sun or sky,
And, when the upland's bright and fair,
Make twilight dim at noontide there ;
And the sole voice the ear receives
Is the light stir of falling leaves,
That, for a moment, rustle low,
Ere dropped in wavering flight below,
Upon the brown earth cushioned o'er
With many an autumn's sheddings hoar.

IV.

I've stood on lone and silent shores
That seldom foot of man explores—
The wild shores of the ocean wild,
When "slumbering like an unweaned child,"
In voiceless creeks and hornèd bays,
On bright and breathless summer days,
When heaven and ocean seemed to keep
Alike a holiday of sleep,
And scarce the coming tide could reach
In drowsiest ripples to the beach,
Whose girdling cliffs in silent air
So silent slept, the wanderer there
Might scarce believe that winds and waves
E'er wrought their sparry cells and caves.

V.

But wheresoe'er, by land or sea,
My solitary step might be,

Never has silence seemed to me
So deep and pure, profound and calm,
So redolent of heavenly balm,
So lulling to the weary breast,
So like a thing of *perfect rest*,
Missioned the brow of care to smoothe,
Missioned the pang of grief to soothe,
As that which from the world away
Steals the touched heart to muse and pray—
The silence of a SABBATH-DAY.

VI.

I've felt it on the waveless main,
I've felt it on the harvest plain.
In the hushed room, the shadowy lane,
In woods, in fields, nor e'en the less
In a vast city's silentness,
Ere the proud minster's deep-knelled warning
Awakes the world beneath to morning—

The silentness of slumbering streets,
And squares, and quays, and anchored fleets
On whose still decks the eyes that keep
Their drowsy watch, half watch, half sleep;
The silentness of towers and domes,
Sleeping o'er thousand sleeping homes;
Of palaces that soar in air
As if for deeper slumber there;
And bridges that the silent stream
Span silently, as in a dream—
E'en then I've felt my full heart say,
'Tis God hath sent the Sabbath-day!
And all around me seemed to tell
That God and nature loved it well!

“AT RAILWAY SPEED.”

[Composed in a Railway Carriage.]

As hurrying eagles cleave the sky —

As clouds obey the hurrying wind,

Away, like chariots winged, we fly,

And seem to leave the world behind!

Oh, hackneyed moral! old and trite,

That all *must* learn, and none *will* heed,

E'en thus youth's busy world and bright

We hurry through “at railway speed!”

In pleasure's path, or gain's keen race,

Whate'er may quicken or impede,

Poor virtue crawls at tortoise pace,

While vice sweeps on “at railway speed.”

To those or blessed or cursed with *hearts*,

(I know not which!) 'tis still decreed

That sorrow comes, and joy departs
With youth and hope "at railway speed!"

As, swifter than the torrent's gush,
As, fleetier than the desert steed,
Away resoundingly we rush,
And mock the winds with fiery speed,
I sigh to think that even thus
Life sees its fairest banks recede,
And love and friendship fly from us,
Or we from them, "at railway speed!"

"WHAT, UPON THIS GLOOMY STRAND."

"What, upon this gloomy strand,
Tracest thou with idle hand,
While the sea-bird wings to land
Through the storm-cloud far above?"

Why, on ever-shifting sand,

Write the names of HOPE and LOVE?”

“Fast, with mocking hand, I trace

Fitting words in fitting place,

Where the wild waves may efface

Names that are *but* names at last!

Fast they ran their treacherous race—

Ocean! wash them out as fast!

“But, on rocks that flintiest be,

FALSEHOOD! I will write of THEE,

Deep as thou hast writ in me!

Deep, oh, deep, the word I'll grave!

Spare it, earth, and sky, and sea!

Spare it, man, and wind, and wave!”

“O WORLD!”

O world! O world! thy cankering tooth!

And is it thus? and is there sooth

In all misanthropy hath said?

Is passion but the cheat of youth?

Are mutual hope and joy and truth

But dreams and ghosts of things long fled?

Is it a dream that there are *hearts*

In human bosoms? Have I nursed,

So long, a phrenzy that departs,

And leaves me in recovery *cursed*?

Then give me back “my fit again!”

Make me delirious as then,

To think disease the sweetest health,

And gloat upon imagined wealth!—

To think the heart is *flesh*, not *stone*,
Alas! *one* proof is mine alone—
This bitter aching in my own !

Oh, let me close these sickening eyes!
If rapture thus experience flies,

 If knowledge bears such bitter rule,
And thus the breast makes sacrifice

 In wisdom's cold and withering school,
'T is *more* than “folly to be wise”—

 'T is madness *not to be a fool!*

“THERE 'S A TOMB.”

A DIRGE.

I.

There's a tomb on yonder desert plain
 Standing alone,
 Moss-o'ergrown,
And the cold night-dew, and the sleety rain,
And the mist-like spray of the roughening main,
 Weep there alone—
Not a tear from human eyes!
And a wind, from the drear north skies,
Alone, with its hollow sighs.
 Maketh a moan
 O'er the mossy stone,

For the dead beneath who lies,

Mute and low!

Be it so.

Deaf ears and sightless eyes

Reck little of tears and sighs,

Nor what rude feet may go,

Quickly or slow,

Over the stone

Standing alone,

Moss-o’ergrown,

Where they beneath lie low.

II.

Of the tomb on yonder desert plain

Standing alone,

Moss-o’ergrown,

And now, by the drear light poured in vain

From the dying moon in her sickly wane,

Drearily shown—

Nought is known;

Nor of him beneath who lies,
Where a wind, from the drear north skies,
Alone, with its hollow sighs,
Maketh a moan
O'er the mossy stone,
For the dead beneath who lies,
Mute and low !
Be it so.
For the reckless dead care not
Who remembered, or who forgot,
Nor who, at last, may go,
Quickly or slow,
Over the stone
Standing alone,
Moss-o'ergrown,
Where they beneath lie low !

SING NOT OF LOVE!

———"We paint him as a child,
When he should sit a Giant in the clouds,
The great destroying spirit of the world!"

CROLY'S "*Catiline*."

Lover and poet! (nay! the two are one.
For all the poetry of life is love!)
Thou with the tell-tale brow untimely wrinkled—
Thou with the sunken eye, and cheek as pale
As sickliest moonlight—listen, and be wise!
If thou dost sing to wake in other hearts
An echo of the throbbings of thine own—
If thou dost sing to have a listening world
Beat time, with dancing spirits, to the measure,
Lover and poet! sing no more of Love!
He is a realmless king—a fallen God—
A name, a shadow. Sing no more of Love!

Sing thou of pleasure—and thy song will please :
Sing thou of gain—and gain what thou dost sing :
Sing thou of war, peace, terror, or delight—
But if thy soul would shun the madman's toil
Of casting nets into a dried-up stream,
(Lover and poet, listen and be wise !)
Sing not of Love in these unloving days !

Are they unloving ? is it truth indeed ?
Or but a flash of cynic bitterness—
The morbid outbreak of a pining breast—
The narrow dogma of a sullen creed ?
Un-loving days ! O ye with gentle hearts,
Call them not such ! Though Mammon be a God
Mighty on earth, and numbering evermore
Fresh shrines and worshippers in every realm,
From the flushed Orient to the pallid west,
From utmost Inde to the far shores that hear
Antipodean oceans lash their granite,

And from the ecliptic to the polar wastes—
Wherever, with keen hand and restless foot,
His great apostle TRAFFIC strides and grasps,
Still, in the vast Pantheon of the Heart,
(The heart, that *will* be loving while 'tis youthful—
The heart, that *will* be youthful while 'tis loving!)
Niches remain for other deities,
The nobler worship of the nobler few,
LOVE 'midst the rest, and far above the many!
O Love! the bright enigma of the earth!
O Love! the Protean juggler of the soul!
O Love! the lovely, yet how terrible!
The seeming gentle, yet how strong and fierce!
The Soother, and Destroyer! Lifter-up,
And Dasher-down! well hath a Poet said
(Though bitterly). "we paint thee as a child,
But thou *should'st* sit a Giant in the clouds,
The great destroying spirit of the world!"

I, too—pale vassal of like bitter rule ;
I, too—pale student of like bitter lore ;
I, too—believe (oh, mournful faith to hold !)
That never upon earth, since earth was thine,
Never, in fable new, or legend old,
In song's bright words, or painting's speaking hues,
Or in the breathing marble of the Greek
(Cut with the chisel that indeed “cuts breath”),
Wandered the spirit of far-erring thought
So erringly as when it pictured *thee*
The laughing cherub that we *see* thee pictured !
Blooming with childhood's ever-happy brow,
And dimpled witchery of roseate cheek,
And arch audacity of glance and gait ;
And shooting, sportively, thy toy-like shafts
'Gainst hearts delighted to be wounded so !

Thou should'st be emblem'd (if the task were mine)
A spirit multiform, and many-hued !

A scorching, freezing, smiling, withering thing!
Compact of all anomalies! blind Fear,
And blinder Trust! Joy, springing to the stars
With his elastic ecstasy! and Grief,
Pale dreamer by the shores of silent lakes,
With hollow eyes, low searching for a grave!

Or, as a tyrant and a torturer—throned
On myriad hearts, 'midst which, on every hand,
Like to the sun-god in his Pythian mood
Of fieriest vengeance, he shoots burning shafts!—
Lover and poet, sing no more of Love.

LOVE AND TRUTH.

I heard a song of tender sooth—

'Twas murmured in a sweet sad tone,

O! Love can only live with Truth,

And sleep on Truth's dear breast alone!

"It cannot breathe in other air—

On other fruit it cannot feed ;

O ye who love, beware, beware !

Be true in word—be true in deed !

"ART THOU SILENT?"

TO * * * * *

"Vouloir oublier quelqu'un, c'est y penser !"

LA BRUYERE.

Must the bitter truth be told

To the heart, however loth ?

Art thou silent as thou 'rt cold ?

Then 'tis well that thou art both !

Had I known thee half as kind,

Half as warm as thou art dear,

How had terror filled my mind

Through this silence blank and drear !

How had Fancy (busy still
 With all thoughts of dark extremes)
Thronged my soul with shapes of ill,
 And my sleep with fearful dreams—

Show'd despair upon thy cheek,
 Pallid sickness on thy brow,
Or thy frame as worn and weak
 As my own with sorrow now !

But, remembering all the past,
 And thy ever-pulseless breast,
I can paint thee, to the last,
 Well, and calm, and self-possessed ;

And still knowing, as I know,
 All the coldness of thy heart,
Why should aught be writ to show
 Still more coldly what thou art ?

When all thoughts of love are dead,
As in thee, alas! they are,
Why should aught be writ or said
To the wretched one afar?

When another's breast is locked
As with triple bars of steel,
Why should ours be idly mocked
With a hope 't were mad to feel?

Oh, thy sickness, Hope deferred!
Oh, that Love with me had been
As a lovely song unheard,
As a lovely flower unseen!

Then had Love's lone habitation
Been the haunt of quiet too,
And its fond imagination
Pictured hers as warm and true!

Now the bitter truth is told
 To the heart, however loth—
 Thou art silent, thou art cold;
 And 't is well that thou art both!

TO THE SILENT.

“ Quand on a assez fait aupres de certaine personnes pour avoir dû se les acquérir, si cela ne réussit point, il y a encore *une* ressource—qui est—*de ne plus rien faire.*”

LA BRUYERE.

“ — My pang shall find a voice.”

MANFRED.

Once more, ere silence gathers me in clouds that will not
 break—

Once more, ere comes the silent sleep, from which no lips
 can wake—

Once more, ere all is silent, as thou long hast been, to me,
 The pang within me finds a voice, and pours it forth to
 thee!

To thee, that will receive it, well I know, as earth receives
On its cold and silent bosom autumn's seared and scattered
leaves—

As the dead receive the tribute flowers we strew upon their
bier—

As flowers above the mourned that grow receive the mour-
ner's tear !

Yes ! I hear the lip of Wisdom say, with grave and quiet
scorn,

“ From the thistle seek to pluck the fig, the grape from off
the thorn ;

But make at last no idle wail, no foolish whimpering coil,
That empty, torn, and bleeding hands repay thy foolish
toil !

“ For what hadst thou, pale fool ! to do with love or beauty ”
thou

With the stamp of care, and middle age, and toil, upon thy
brow ?

With fortune, with the trampling world, and with thyself
at strife,
And a chain around thee cankering through thy very life of
life!"

O thou, that wert, and *art*, so dear! (for still the madness
burns!)

How vainly wisdom strives to teach what passion never learns!
How vainly to the throbbing heart, that will not make reply,
She presses with her "wherefore?" keen, and coldly-reason-
ing "why?"

I know that I had never aught to ask or hope from thee—
I know the fettered hand can seek no union with the free—
I know that in the mutual heart's divinely ordered bower
We cannot wreath the fresh spring rose with the fading
autumn flower.

I know my pangs are idle things—as vague and strange to
thee,
As shipwreck's horrors unto one that never saw the sea!

I know a frozen, pulseless calm is native to thy breast,
As the iceberg to its arctic home, the dormouse to its nest.

Love and Wisdom, though, it may be, they are twins of
heavenly birth,

And in heaven are sister angels—are no sisters upon earth !
Seldom falls the smile of Wisdom upon Love's impassioned
thrill,

Seldom comes the happy bridal of the Reason and the Will !

In the mighty realms of science, in the boundless world of
thought,

Man may choose the field and pathway where his marvels
shall be wrought—

He may choose the humble valley, he may will to climb
above,

But he cannot will, he cannot choose, to love, or not to
love !

In the lowly glen the rustic builds his lowly shed at choice,
On the lordly hill the castle soars at Grandeur's lordly voice ;

As freely man may choose his home as her nestling-place
the dove,

But he cannot choose from many hearts the heart that he
should love !

Thence, in Passion's fearful garden, all the verdure rank
that grows—

Thence the mildew on the fairest plant, the canker in the
rose !

Thence the blight of many a passion-flower, long, long ere
scorching prime—

Thence the withering up of many a bud, long, long ere
withering time !

On the shores of lovely England, lovely beings everywhere
Seem to give the earth fresh verdure—fresher sweetness to
the air !

Many lovely forms and features pass us in the city throng,
Many lovely forms and features glance our sylvan paths
along—

Forms that laugh the fabled gracefulness of fabled things to
scorn,

Cheeks that shame the sunset glory, eyes diviner than the
morn !

And we gaze, and cry "How beautiful ! all beauty else
above !"

Yet turn upon our path again without a thought of love.

But here comes, at last, a form—a lip—an eye—(although
its glance

Than many another lovely one no lovelier is, perchance,)

And a burning, trembling something tells at once within
the breast,

That it hath gained for evermore a burning, trembling
guest !

Not always sweetness, goodness, worth, the charm of mutual
minds,

Nor even Beauty's treacherous self, the chain of passion
binds ;

A power occult—a sympathy, or genial or perverse,
Still draws the yielding spirit to its blessing or its curse !

And not in morbid spleen or pride I murmur this to thee,
For thou indeed wert beautiful to others as to me ;
But oft we might as well demand of homeward-hastening doves
Why there they haste, as ask the heart a reason why it loves.

In Friendship's milder dream of joy—perchance not all a
dream—

Some little ground pale Reason gives for liking and esteem,
Some little help the fabric boasts from Wisdom's shaping hand,
Some little promise Knowledge gives that 't is not built on
sand !

But LOVE, a stormy vision ! comes, fierce, sweepingly, and
blind,

And Reason, Wisdom, Knowledge, all, are scattered to the
wind !

For loving some *un-loving* thing all earthly things above,
A "woman's reason" serves alone—"we love *because* we
love!"—

Oh, the *worldly* wise! the *worldly* good! the gaining,
grasping, still!

In the sordid ranks of Mammon's host who put their *hearts*
to drill!

Who, of right, and wrong, and worth, and blame, have but
one sordid test,

And Gold is Passion's serpent-rod to swallow all the
rest!

No passion else—no impulse brave—can tear in *them*
apart,

As lightning tears its cloudy fold, the foldings of the heart!
They choose their lot—*they* choose their world—*they* choose
their sordid mates,

And gold, that bars *their* gates from all, *un-bars* to *them* all
gates!

But *I*, a being framed for love, (oh ! proudly let me speak,
For 't is the very strength of love that makes me worldly
weak !)

I could not choose ; my reason slept ; its powers were never
free,

Or wherefore did a heart like mine so doat on one like thee ?

On thee, whose heart, compared, had seemed as ever-
gathering snow

Above the hushed volcano's peaks, to the lava-flood below !

Thy nature, at its wildest, but as calm to storm ; and all

Its passions as a sleeping lake to a torrent in its fall !

How I loved thee ! how I doated ! oh, the humbling word
to say !

Clasped thy image, pressed it to me, dreaming night and
toiling day !

How I loved thee ! how I doated ! made thy love my all
in all !

And beheld thee with a madness that 't is madness to recall !

Well, 't is something, on the arid peak of backward-gazing
thought,

To see, at last, with moteless eyes, what hollow things we
sought!

To *see* that all we held so fair were dreams in shadows
clad—

To *feel* that we were cheated fools—to *know* that we were
mad!

'T is something, as we list to all that self-reproaching
din,

And beat, like suffering LEAR, the gate which let our
folly in—

'T is something to believe that life *hath* founts of solace yet,
Could we drink of that divinest one which charms us to
forget!

I have *striven* to forget, but he who strives in torturing pain
To forget his pangs when keenest, strives less hopelessly in
vain!

I have striven to forget thee, and have proved still o'er and
o'er,

So to strive is but to bear thee in remembrance more and
more !

I have striven to forget thee, 'midst the lovely and the kind,
Where loveliness grew lovelier in the light of heart and
mind ;

Where the spirit of all generous thought and impulses
divine

Flashed out, as flash the spirit's rays from an inner-burning
shrine !

I have striven to forget thee, looking deep in other eyes,
And from out their starry depth have caught sweet eloquent
replies !

I have prest a lip that pride itself might well be proud to
press,

And lovely arms have circled me with innocent caress !

But evermore, how sweet soe'er the form, the hour, the spot,
Thy image comes, a haunting thing, that *will* not be forgot !

It will not let another break the seal which Thou hast set ;
It points to all the mournful past, and *dares* me to forget !

If by demons from beneath the earth, or angels from above,
That bitter seed is sown on earth which grows to hopeless
love,

I know not ; but I know that love's no plant of human choice,
And the heart, to *love*, or *not* to love, had never yet a voice !

Therefore, mingled with my sorrow, idle wrath could never be,
That a passion deeply felt as mine thou could'st not feel for
me ;

Oh ! better, kindlier, had'st thou done, all bonds at once to
sever,

And down the wind to whistle me for ever and for ever !

For PRIDE, perchance, had trampled then this trampler in
my breast,

And keen Ambition built for me a far-off, stormy nest,

And prouder then my heart had soared, and wrestled with
its lot,

And *thou*, perchance, e'er this, had'st grown a thing indeed
forgot!

But it was not well, 'twixt smiles and frowns, to balance so
thy power,

As plays the cat her torturing game from cruel hour to hour—

It was not well—O Pride! O Pride! 'Tis well, at least, that
thou

Art come with haughty hand to dash this shame from off
my brow!

'Tis well, reproachful as thou art, *thy* voice at length hath
come

To bid my own self-humbling voice for evermore be dumb!

To bid me from rememb'rance blot each record dearest
prized,

And write upon my ruined heart "Rejected, not despised!"

To bid me seek, with calmer gaze, what happier spirits find,
Calm fortitude in "years that bring the philosophic mind."
Alas! the fitting years are come—I feel them on the wing,
But not the philosophic mind I know that they should bring!

Enough! my pang hath "found a voice." I go—my wail is
o'er:

Were mine the eagle's length of life, that wail should rise
no more.

The fount is sealed, the volume closed; henceforth, without
a moan,

I gird up all my wasted heart to reap what I have sown!

"GIVE ME A GOBLET."

Give me a goblet, starred with gems

Rich as the gorgeous slaves of Ind

Lavished on princeless diadems,

The brows of mightiest kings to bind!

And, in the dazzling treasure deep,
 Pour ye a sweeter, subtler draught
Than grape of ruddiest blush can weep,
 Or mortal lip hath ever quaffed:

Then bid, by its enchanted beams,
 At my lone board a guest appear,
That glory of our youthful dreams,
 A friend unchangeably sincere—
By all this heart would not forget
 For myriad gems of matchless glow,
By every hope that warms it yet,
 For HIM that cup divine should flow!

A HEALTH!

TO E. G.

While around the wine-cup's brimming,
Do they bid me name a name
Worth a poet's festal hymning,
Were each breath the breath of fame?

Then, where'er on earth thou turnest,
On the cold world's restless sea,
"Here's a double health," dear Ernest!
Trebled o'er to thine and thee!

Bring a goblet such as never
Graced the banquets of the East—
Crush me brighter grapes than ever
Wept at kingly bridal feast—

And, as kings, in ages olden,
Ere a loved one's health they quaffed,
Melted gems of price untold in
The bright, heart-honoured draught,

Shed in *this* a pearl diviner
Than old ocean ever knew—
Richer gem than ever miner
From earth's diamond quarries drew :

Then, ere colder lips profane it,
Be it mine, dear Ernest, mine !
And in double healths I'll drain it,
Trebled o'er to thee and thine !

ELEGIAC STANZAS,

UPON THE DEATH OF A LADY—YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL, ACCOMPLISHED, AND
UNFORTUNATE.—APRIL, 1843.

“ Nous mourons tous les jours, et nous sommes déjà mort à une infinité des choses : combien ai-je vû de personnes et de lieux que je ne reverrai jamais ! tous les jours j'en vois pour la dernière fois—n'est-ce pas une espèce de mort ?

“ De tout ce que l'homme voit, il est lui-même la chose la moins durable : les édifices qu'il élève, les arbres qu'il plant—tous ces choses ont infiniment plus de durée que lui : ces traits mêmes que ma plume trace presentement dureront beaucoup plus que moi,—triste pensée !”

LA BRUYÈRE.

And thou art in “ the narrow bed !”

Pillowed by that remembered heath,

Where every flower we shun to tread

Shall image her who lies beneath.

Thou, too, art gone ! a heavy word,

Rung on the heart's reluctant ear,

As sounds of shipwreck-wail are heard

Loading the night winds bleak and drear !

So rang the voice that told me first
 Thou wert the grave's eternal bride!
Ere clouds of darker suffering burst
 Whose darkness blotted all beside :

Ere fell the blow upon my heart,
 Deadening all else by sorrow dealt;
As in the death-wound's burning smart
 All other pangs become unfelt.

O the trite moral's bitter truth!
 " Vain is the love that dotes on clay ;"
O the poor boast of health and youth,
 When *thou* canst moulder thus away !

Where now for solace shall we turn ?
 And what are love and memory now ?
Pale lights upon the vessel's stern,
 While all grows dark beneath her prow !

For what remains, escaped the wave
Of stormy fate that wrecked us thus?
To thee the lone and quiet grave,
And many a living death to us !

The fresh-heaved turf's sepulchral mound,
The voiceless chamber's vacant chair,
And many a phantom shape and sound
Of form and voice no longer there !

'Tis said there are prophetic gleams
In the last glance of those most dear ;
And in the voice a tone that seems
Hollow and dirge-like to the ear !

But *thine*, when last 't was ours to part,
With many a hope my spirit cheered ;
And not a glance, to strike the heart
With mournful augury, appeared.

No ! not a look, nor tone, nor word,
To wake one thought of dread for thee,
Or whisper that I saw and heard
The last that I should hear and see.

With bloom that seemed to mock at blight,
With health and joy on cheek and brow,
And laughing eyes of loveliest light,
How young and beautiful wert thou !

It seemed as if thy dark hair curled
Over a brow no grief could shade,
As if, amidst a fading world,
Thy beauty only could not fade !

So drains the warrior joy's last cup,
Ere to the fated field he hies ;
So the lamp's quivering flame leaps up
In triple splendour ere it dies !

Before me as thy image sweeps,
 Though glimmering through the mist of tears,
No charnel frowns, no reptile creeps,
 No triumph of the grave appears !

Thy *living* bloom I yet behold—
 I cannot paint thee with the dead,
Nor think of thee as pale and cold,
 And mute, in their eternal bed !

Yet hath thy cheek its tender hue,
 Yet hath thine eye its starry ray ;
For what had blight with thee to do ?
 Or thou with darkness and decay ?

Pale sleeper of the narrow bed !
 Pillowed by that remembered heath,
Where every flower we shun to tread
 Shall image her who lies beneath.

Above thy timeless grave be heard
 No sound but Pity's gentlest sigh ;
And " Rest in peace !" the coldest word
 Breathed by the coldest passer by !

The " cistern wheel " hath ceased to play,
 The fountain's " golden bowl " is broken,
The " silver cord " is loosed for aye,
 And sorrow's last farewell is spoken !

But while pale memory spreads her wing,
 Thy image, from her mournful shore,
A lovely, lingering, haunting thing,
 Shall flit to us for evermore !

1843.

STANZAS

ADDRESSED TO A BEAUTIFUL LADY WHOM THE AUTHOR
HEARD DECLARE "SHE NEVER FORGAVE!"

"Never forgive!" I turn to see

Whose lip those words of death could speak—

Angel of mercy! can it be

That they were syllabled by *thee*,

With youth and beauty on thy brow and cheek!

"Never forgive!" Those lips were sure

For holier breathings framed, and lit

With Love's own roseate lustre pure!

Oh! how could demon Hate endure

Long on a throne so framed for Love to sit?

Had I, in passion's genial day,

While yet my heart had warmth and bloom,

Offended aught in human clay

So formed that burning heart to sway,

And sear it with the dread of such a doom—

How had I knelt—conjured her by

Each charm the blighting Passions nip :

And clung, and prayed, and toiled, to spy

Forgiveness in her heavenly eye,

And kissed it, trembling, from her heavenly lip !

ON APPROACHING MY BIRTH-PLACE.

My place of birth ! my place of birth !

Approaching thee, what thoughts arise !

Is this the same green happy earth ?

Are those the same blue joyous skies

That once gave rapture to my eyes,

And filled them with a purer mirth
Than manhood's happiest hour supplies?
Oh! joy's abundance changed to dearth!
Oh! years on years how little worth!
Alas! 't is thus the full heart cries!

My native town! my native town!
Thus entering thee, what thoughts arise!
Methinks thy very walls look down
With conscious and maternal eyes,
And give to mine sweet sad replies
No sound or sight shall ever drown!
But there, oh, there, the solace dies!
For not *one* friend remains to crown
One thought with joy in thee, dear town—
Alas! alas! the full heart cries.

LIVERPOOL, Dec. 19, 1839.

“WHAT LOVELY EYES!”

What lovely eyes! what lovely eyes!

 Methinks, since first my course I held
In that sweet land of happy sighs
Where Beauty glads both earth and skies,
And tames the proud, and fools the wise,
Such lovely eyes, such lovely eyes,

 I never in my life beheld!

They bid such questions sweet arise—
They give such bright and sweet replies—

 That, like a creature charm-compelled,
My spirit cries, in glad surprise,
“Such lovely eyes, such lovely eyes,

 I never in my life beheld!”

What lovely lips ! what lovely lips !

 Methinks, since first my heart rebelled
In that sweet land of venial slips
Where Passion rarely even dips
 in Reason's urn his finger-tips,
Such lovely lips, such lovely lips,

 I never in my life beheld !
I swear, for two delicious sips,
(All others they so far eclipse !)

 I'd fain and gladly be compelled
To bear the lash of twenty whips !
Such lovely lips, such lovely lips,
 I never in my life beheld !

THE SECRET.

In a fair lady's heart once a SECRET was lurking—

It tossed, and it tumbled—it longed to get out :

The LIPS half betrayed it by smiling and smirking,

And TONGUE was impatient to blab it, no doubt !

But HONOUR looked stern on the subject, and gave it

In charge to the TEETH, (so enchantingly white !)

Should the captive attempt an elopement, to save it

By giving the LIPS an admonishing bite !

'T was said, and 't was settled ; Sir HONOUR departed :

TONGUE quivered and trembled, but dare not rebel

When, right to its tip SECRET suddenly started,

And half, in a whisper, escaped from its cell !

Quoth the TEETH, in a pet, “ we 'll be even for this ! ”

And they bit very hard, both above and beneath ;

But the LIPS, at that moment, were bribed with a KISS,

And they popped out the Secret “ *in spite of their teeth !* ”

THE VISION.

A FRAGMENT.

“ ‘ Surely,’ said I, ‘ man is but a shadow, and life a dream ! how are we given away to misery and mortality ! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death.’ ”

THE VISION OF MIRZAH.

Ere, at deep midnight, slumber stole

O'er lids that drooped but struggled still—

Ere all of sense and all of soul

Obed, at last, her dreaming will—

I read that loveliest eastern tale,

That vision of delight and awe,

Which Mirzah, in the hollow vale

Of Bagdad, dreamed he heard and saw :

And following as the Genius led,

My soul with shapes and types was thronged ;

And Fancy, when no more I read,
 The lovely vision still prolonged.
Divinely (as I dropped or laid
 The volume down, when sleep drew near)
Those airs divine the Genius played
 Came, dream-like, on my dreaming ear.

I saw, far down the mountain ridge,
 The Vale of Sorrows stretched below ;
And through Life's many-archèd bridge
 Time's hurrying waters break and flow.
I saw, as swept the clouds o'er these,
 The happy realms of endless rest ;
The " thousand little shining seas "
 And glittering islands of the blest.

But sleep hath its caprices strange,
 Our very dreams are fickle too ;
And o'er my vision came a change
 The happier Mirzah's never knew—

An icy change that seemed to freeze

 Upon my lip Hope's sunny smiles ;

And darkened all the shining seas,

 And blotted all the happy isles !

Methought o'er naked crags I roamed,

 Where, far beneath, a great Deep lay,

Whose stormy billows raged and foamed,

 And sent up thunder clothed in spray ;

And, inland far, from one sharp peak

 That overlooked both earth and main,

Of mingled fen and fallow bleak,

 Far-stretched, I saw a dreary plain.

I saw, methought, the shadows there

 Of all that human hearts pursue ;

The heaped-up wreck of whatsoe'er

 We strive through life to grasp or do ;

The skeletons and shattered frames

 Of fallen cities, domes, and towers—

All types of ruined hopes and aims,
Of fruitless toils and wasted powers.

And there, a pale and haggard race,
Whirling along like autumn leaves,
Drifted in everlasting chace

Of all that on the earth deceives,
I saw them pluck with eager hand,
And wreath as flowers, the rank fen grass ;
I saw them build on flitting sand ;
I saw them plough the deep morass.

And there, all quick, self-torturing things
Wrought out amain their own decay :
And fiercely drank at troubled springs,
And turned from limpid brooks away.
While shapes, like phantoms, seemed to glide
In hideous couples everywhere ;
Here, Guilt and Sorrow, side by side,
And Cruelty and Suffering there !

I saw the toiling, torturing crowd

With nature and themselves at strife,
And cried in bitterness aloud,

“ Oh, God ! and this is mortal life !
Shadows, and clouds, and mists, we grasp,
Yet murmur when they fade and melt ;
And serpents to our breasts we clasp,
Yet marvel when their sting is felt ! ”

* * * * *

E'en thus, while round his glorious head

The radiance flashed with lovelier dyes,
The bright, benignant Spirit said ;
And thus my answer dared arise—

“ Poor is the strife 'twixt earth and skies !
’Twixt heavenly strength and frail decay—
Thou art an angel good and wise,
And *I* a feeble thing of clay.”

* * * * *

STANZAS

UPON THE DEATH OF THE AMIABLE AND DEEPLY
LAMENTED MISS I * * * * *, OF W * * * * *,
COUNTY OF DURHAM.

And hath thy gentle spirit fled,
Oh, gentlest thing of mortal birth,
That ever to the virtuous dead
Soared from the dark and sorrowing earth!

I hear a voice proclaim thee gone—
I hear it as a timeless knell
At startled midnight rung for one
We saw at eve look brightly well!

For never murmur struck my ear
Of sickness wasting thee away;
And *now*, upon thy clay-cold bier
I know that thou art colder clay!

And I recall thine accents sweet.

And looks with angel-goodness bright ;

Lips that were mercy's chosen seat,

And eyes of pure benignant light ;

A heart from whose deep fountains welled

Love pure as from a seraph's urn ;

A hand that "when the poor beheld,

They blessed it," and were blessed in turn !

And these are mute, and quenched, and chilled,

Like things of common mould and beam ;

The pulse of holiest passions stilled,

And charity an ice-bound stream !

Oh, selfish pangs of human hearts,

That will not, will not feel resigned !

Oh, blessèd spirit that departs !

Oh, suffering spirits left behind !

If I, a stranger, thus can grieve,
Alas! for those, the near and dear,
Whom death can never more bereave
Of aught so loved and lovely here!

Alas! for *him* whose springs of woe
All lesser griefs bid silent be!
Oh, spirit pure, for whom they flow,
Alas! for *him*, and not for thee!

SONNETS.

I.

TO ———.

This life, along whose early paths we press
With hopes so warm, so eager, so mistaken,
Now lulled by gentlest winds, now tempest-shaken,
Until the garden grows a wilderness—
How shrink, at length, its flowers from our caress,
A banquet by the heart no more partaken !
Nay, those that *most* our admiration waken,
Still those we never, never shall possess !
Oh, thou, whom admiration in *mute* trance
Cannot behold ! if e'er the feeble voice
Of this poor song steal to thine ear by chance,
Remember, that of human WILL or CHOICE
Love is no vassal ! He, with one quick glance
Bids the heart pine for ever—or rejoice.

II.

How shall I image, save by some worn thought,
Some hackneyed emblem of self-ruining things.
(Eagles that brave deep gulphs on shattered wings.
Moths in the lamp's destructive splendour caught.
Whatever hath its own confusion wrought !)
This new-born frenzy in my soul that springs,
This madness of the heart, to thine that clings,
E'en as the mad the stars to grasp have sought !
For what but a sweet star art thou to me,
Lovely, and bright, and distant ? To adore,
And to despair, are all I can for thee.
There sparkling where no wing of mine can soar
Alas, that youth, joy, hope, so *brief* should be,
Yet passion in the heart burn more and more !

III.

Could I re-tread the regions of the Past,
And people them afresh with whatsoe'er
Of good, and true, and beautiful, and fair,
The weary heart so fain would have amassed,
And most hath been forbidden, first and last—
THEE would I place as my chief treasure there!
To breathe, on lovelier earth, diviner air,
And pour delight around thee far and fast!
How would I pillow then this aching head
On thy sweet breast, as on a heavenly bank.
And take no note of the loud world's unrest,
Nor ever hear its sordid fetters clank—
Alas! no step the Past can e'er retread,
And the stern Future shows a dreary blank!

IV.

O joy to which all else are joyless things !
Joy that makes pale all ecstasy beside !
When Hope comes smiling to Affection's side,
And dream on dream of answering fondness brings !
Oh, misery beyond all else that wrings
The suffering breast by stormiest passions tried,
When Love sits lonely as a widowed bride,
Where never flower of mutual passion springs !
Alas ! *thy* heart to mine makes no reply—
There is no sympathy 'twixt blight and bloom !
Yet, not with anger in thy dark bright eye
Shadow my onward path with deeper gloom—
Breathe, o'er the wreck thou see'st me, one sweet sigh,
And let *Forgiveness* be thy sternest doom !

V.

" Our birth is but a sleep, and a forgetting."

WORDSWORTH.

If it be true—as one great bard hath said,
And, haply, many thought—that, ere we raise
A mortal eyelid, we have drank the rays
Of brighter suns, in holier regions shed,
And are but from a more ethereal bed
Fallen on colder climes and darker days,
With gleams of memory, brightening earth's dull haze,
Of things long loved ere earth received our tread—
If it be thus, (oh, joy that such thoughts are !)
Thee, lovely spirit ! mine hath surely met
In some immortal mansion high and far,
And hath divine remembrance of thee yet ;
A flower fresh sprung—a re-appearing star,
Newly up-risen after long, long set !

VI.

O lovely memories of Love's sweet hours !
Upon your halcyon wings how sweetly ye
Float back, and hover broodingly o'er me,
And freshen my worn heart as gentle showers
Freshen the summer glebe ! and, like the flowers
Astolfo saw on Eden's lovely lea,
(While soared his Hippogriff sublimely free,)
"Nourish the soul with sweetness !" Time devours
Man and his works, but the Destroyer yet
Preys not on *you* ! Come, when the stars are met
Like drowsy sentinels on Heaven's high towers :
Sad to remember, sadder to forget,
Are your sweet griefs ! If thrown on Lethe's brink,
I would not stoop this fevered lip to drink !

VII.

Oh, Life, Love, Youth! can ye apart endure?
Or be endured? as Life with Love is twined,
And Youth nor grief nor ecstasy can find
More dear or dread than Love can give or cure;
When Youth hath flown, with every glittering lure,
Can Love still linger tremblingly behind?
Think! in "the vale of years" although declined,
How loved by Desdemona was the Moor!
"Somewhat declined into the vale of years—
But that's not much," so runs *my* story too:
Yet, loving fervently as youth can do,
Alas! what destiny for *me* appears?
No Desdemona's deep return and true,
But silent pangs and solitary tears!

VIII.

“ ‘Well, then,’ I said, ‘fair spirit, I will meet thee at Philippi!’ ”

STERNE.

“ Well then, fair spirit,” since the dye is cast,
And Fate hath but one voice—that we must *part*,
Take thou assurance from my heart of heart
“ I ’ll meet thee at Phillipi ! ” Would ’t were past.
The dreary interval ! O Time ! as fast
As Venus’ doves through Paphian clouds can dart,
Speed thou away, lame grey-beard though thou art,
And I will praise thee with glad songs at last !
Farewell, sweet love ! and wheresoever thou
Scatterest delight around thee, like the spring,
May joy and health *their* vernal roses fling
In lavish bounty on thy cheek and brow !
And many a dream to *me* in pity bring
Thy image back, as I behold it now !

IX.

That I have dared to love thee! (*Dared!* oh, what
Will Love *not* dare? Love that hath torn apart
The triple fastenings of my guarded heart,
To reign sole tyrant of that troubled spot!)
That I have dared to love thee, blame me not;
Love is a crime bears its own proper smart!
Blame rather Fate that made thee what thou art,
And portioned *me* this unresisting lot.
One fault alone at my heart's door there lies,
That I have dared its madness *to reveal!*
Oh, pardon *that*, if ever truest sighs
In woman's gentle heart made soft appeal;
Glance me forgiveness from thy heavenly eyes,
And with a kiss—not words—my pardon seal!

X.

Now, while my torn heart trembles on the verge
Of quitting thee, my only love, for ever,
How Reason struggles, with a vain endeavour,
Her cold, cold plea of “fortitude” to urge !
Alas ! as one that in the raging surge
Sees his struck bark from her last moorings sever,
And cries for the far help which cometh never,
And hears in every blast his funeral dirge !
I look on *thee*, and with that look resign
The sweetest hope that ever joyed my soul !
Oh, now, or fleet, or slow, life’s tides may roll,
Little it recks—a shoreless voyage mine !
A race of anguish to a bitter goal—
A weary pilgrimage, without a shrine !

XI.

Even as one from dreams, half hope, half fear,
Roused by a blow, my stricken spirit reels
With a quick pang, nor word nor look reveals,
Turning the heart's leaf in an instant sere ;
O'er me, with palsying torpor, dead and drear,
An icy sense of blank desertion steals,
Such as, at last, Despair's worst victim feels,
The wretch who breathes no sigh, and sheds no tear !
Now, to the deaf cold winds, and voiceless shades
Of unrevealing night, I pour this plaint
Once, and no more ! Its last word melts and fades
Away for ever—faint, and yet more faint ;
And silently my heart my lip upbraids,
Finding no voice its misery to paint !

XII.

“ Vouloir oublier quelqu'un, c'est y penser ! ”

LA BRUYERE.

These fits must have an end—these wayward musings,
These starts of Passion's playful bitterness,
The heart's strange pastime with its own distress,
Fancy's and sorrow's mingled interfusings.
I must recall my soul from its dark cruisings
Over the gulph wherein still less and less
'T is fitted to endure the stormy stress
Of thoughts that wear it with tempestuous bruising.
'T is time that I should wean me from the past,
And let the future bear its own stern debt ;
Nor draw from all those bitter stores amassed
Through years on which the seal of fate is set.
But, ah ! no way to make remembrance last
So sure as this sad striving to forget !

XIII.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—1844.

Since the meek Saviour o'er his Godhead wore
Our mortal vesture of decay and tears,
Forty, and three, and eighteen hundred years
Have rolled their moments to the eternal shore.
O THOU whose quenchless mercy, more and more,
And long, long sufferance every hour appears—
Thou, the despised, mocked, thorn-crowned, pierced with
spears,
Whom for our sins the bitter cross up-bore,
All-pitying SAVIOUR ! o'er the thankless earth,
Since to the throne of the Almighty Dove
Thou re-ascended'st—(triumphing above
Sin and the grave !)—what *fruits* redeem our dearth ?
A race still gladdening on thy day of birth,
But wandering ever from thy law and love !

XIV.

PEACE, OR WAR?

Thus saith THE SAVIOUR—"Be ye calm and meek:
Wrong not; revenge not; wear no sullen frown;
Let not the sun upon your wrath go down;
And to the smiter turn a patient cheek;
Strive not your veriest wrong of wrongs to wreak;
Ask ye a heavenly, not an earthly crown;
Bear, and forbear—all thoughts of vengeance drown:
Mild with the strong, and loving with the weak."
—What saith THE WORLD? "Be stubborn, fierce, and bold.
Fiery, and wrathful: grasp the sword and shield!
Shed blood like water, rather die than yield,
And wreak your slightest wrong a thousand-fold!"
—Oh, ye who wrong or who are wronged, behold!
And choose your master, *two* are here revealed!

XV.

PEACE, OR WAR?

(CONTINUED.)

Yes! let the world, that thing of haughty dust,
That paragon of ashes and of clay,
That gives its fiercest passions fiercest play,
And deifies dominion's fiery lust,
Choose, for the hour will come when choose it must,
'Twixt God and Moloch! *choose*, ere thus it pray—
"O God, we do beseech thee we may slay
Our tens of thousands! we alone are just.
Let rapine praise thee, slaughter be thy rod,
Cries, shrieks, and groans, thy sweetest savour be,
And burning cities a delight to thee!
'T is *for thy Glory* that we slay, O God,
And drench with blood and tears earth's groaning sod,
And carry havoc far o'er land and sea!"

XVI.

THE DEATH OF SOUTHEY.

"The rapt one of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth;
And *Lamb*, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth!
Like clouds that rake the mountain summit,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has Brother followed Brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land!"

WORDSWORTH.

How every spirit, beautiful and bright,
That charmed me from my boyhood, dies away!
Flowers that were long the glory of my day.
Stars that were long the glory of my night!
The tuneful orbs of intellectual light
That first into my heart with kindling ray
Poured the deep love of song, where now are they?
What happier sphere is hallowed by their flight?
Scott, Coleridge, Shelley, Crabbe, Lamb, Byron! Ye
Darkened the earth with your eclipse! and *now*
SOUTHEY "the wild and wondrous," where is HE?
O Death! stern victor of the world! ere thou
Vanquish again so many a laurelled brow,
The Saviour of the world may vanquish *thee*!

XVII.

TO M. S. M., A DEAR FRIEND, WHO, SHORTLY AFTER, DIED OF CONSUMPTION—YOUNG, AMIABLE, AND FULL OF THE RICH PROMISE OF GENIUS.

THE SEARCH FOR HEALTH.

(SEPTEMBER, 1837.)

On the calm bosom of that winding lake
Whose banks sage Lyulph roamed in days of yore,
Dost thou in dreamy mood, with half-dipped oar,
Wisely voluptuous, thy pleasure take ?
Or lov'st thou stormier holiday to make,
Clambering the dun and dizzy peaks that soar
Desolate WAST's lone voiceless regions o'er,
Where sound nor sign of mortal life awake ?
Or, on the gentler CROMACH's bright expanse,
Or lovely DERWENT's crystal, dost thou float ?
Or with the ripple of thy gliding boat
Break lovelier WINDERMERE's delicious trance ?
Or art thou yet, dear Milton, *more* remote,
" Lone-seated by the shores of old romance ?"

XVIII.

SICKNESS.

(JANUARY, 1838.)

(CONTINUED.)

Alas ! dear friend, nor hill nor lake could bring,
Nor glen, nor dale, nor bloom of flower or tree,
Health's bounding step and joyous pulse to thee—
Still, still afar she spread the elusive wing !
There came no healing in the taintless spring.
Nor in the mountain-torrent gushing free,
Nor all of health in Nature thou could'st see.
Nor all her choral ministers could sing !
Had'st thou a canker at the heart's warm core,
A secret, silent sorrow that preyed on
And on, until the life of life was o'er,
And all that nerved the drooping frame was gone ?
No voice replies ; thy youthful cheek grew wan,
And youth's brave heart could wake its bloom no more !

XIX.

DEATH.

(MARCH, 1838.)

(CONTINUED.)

No, thou art gone ! the lingering hopes that lay
Warm at my heart, though tremblingly, are o'er ;
They cannot cheat again its pining core
With credulous trust from anxious day to day !
I know that Death hath changed to colder clay
Than the cold grave, a breast, so warm before,
That, known but once, 't was loved for evermore,
Yet moulders now like common dust away !
O loved too briefly ere the mortal stroke,
Child of affection, genius, goodness, all
That soothes with angel-hand our mortal yoke,
'Tis meet thy gentle virtues I recall,
'Tis meet thy gentle spirit I invoke,
'Tis meet my bitterest tears for thee should fall !

XX.

“KNOW THYSELF.”

“Now can I play the fool with my own fancies.”

COLERIDGE.

Passing, one night, a huge old mirror, where
Appeared reflected my own form and face,
I was at once amused and vexed to trace
How the vain shadow busied itself there—
Painting the clouds, building high towers in air,
And strengthening them with bubbles at the base !
Then cried I, “ Well ! of fools in every place
Thou art the most laborious one, I swear ! ”
At which, one near me iterated “ *Fool !*
Why not a lover ? or why not a poet ? ”
“ Oh,” I replied, “ they ’re all of one old school,
Though not delighted when their annals show it ;
And if in *my* case you would prove the rule,
Alas, my friend, I feel it, and I know it ! ”

XXI.

LOVE LAUGHS AT LOCKSMITHS.

“ Love laughs at locksmiths,” has been often said ;
But there are locks that all his mirth defy—
So stubborn, tears might “ redden his blind eye,”
If he was ever known a tear to shed—
Locks of all sorts and metals, gold and lead,
(To speak in metaphor,) his skill decry ;
For which he never had the luck to try
Picklock or key that stood him in good stead.
Oh, Love ! what locks, what bolts and bars arrest
Thy steps to me, and mine to my sweet love ?
Devise some “ open sesamè ! ” thou ’d’st best !
Or whirl me upon dragon-wings above ;
Or lend the soft plumes of thy mother’s dove,
That I may “ flee away, and be at rest ! ”

XXII.

"Ne pourrait-on point découvrir l'art de se faire aimer de sa femme?"

LA BRUYERE.

"O slanderer!—Do not learn of him, Emilia, although he be thy husband!"

OTHELLO.

Man 's a strange creature ! In the poet's strains,
The patriot's eloquence, the hero's strife,
In war, from the proud falchion to the knife,
Tis FREEDOM fires the lip, and swells the veins !
For *her* a thousand penalties and pains
Through life we brave; and yet, in *early* life,
Name but that talismanic word—a wife,
And what a hurry we are in for chains !
O thou ! of our afflicted mortal state
The Janus-faced enslaver ! in whose toil
(Toil in the dark word's double sense !) stern Fate
Strangles the heart as with a serpent's coil !
We seek in thee a cherub-visaged mate,
And find a tyrant eager to despoil !

XXIII.

THE WORLD.

To look upon this world is to behold
A wilderness of all keen, ravenous things,
Fanged, tusked, and clawed, with harpy beaks and
wings,
Or, snake-like, coiled in many a deadly fold ;
Hungering and thirsting are they all for *gold*,
And howling for the hour their prey that brings—
Their prey for which *this* gores, *that* bites or stings,
Pride crawls in dust, and cowardice is bold !
And, in the midst of this so-peopled den,
Girdled around with rapine, as a wall,
MAMMON, the worshipful, the all-in-all,
The King and God of those fierce beasts called *men*,
Sits throned and shrined ; and at his feet they fall,
Body and soul, again and yet again !

XXIV.

THE WORLD.

(CONTINUED.)

'T is not the world I looked upon afar,
Through the sweet vista of my childhood's bowers,
And dreamed I saw it shining at all hours,
Lovely and glorious as the morning star !
O God ! when I compare the things that *are*,
In this all-promise-breaking life of ours,
With that *imagined* realm of thornless flowers
Grief should not blight, nor trampling hatred mar,
I feel like one whom Time, the juggler hoary,
Mocks with a trick that now no more deceives,
Tossing the balls of fame, love, friendship, glory,
Before an eye that *sees*, but not *believes* :
Or like the gull in the Arabian story,
Whose treasured coin all changed to withered leaves !

XXV.

THE WORLD.

(CONTINUED.)

Let me speak proudly—TRUTH may well be proud !
I entered upon life with heart as frank
As ever at the fount perennial drank
Of truth and trustfulness ! all thoughts avowed,
All hopes, fears, loves, resentments, voiced aloud,
With lip and heart that never quailed or sank !
Then, whom, O Nature ! whom have I to thank
For disappointments endless ? Let me crowd
Long memories of the past in one brief space,
And, gazing on the record, sadly own,
Earlier the bitter lore I might have known
Of mortal Love's fast-changing heart and face :
That Love and Faith unite in heaven alone—
Seldom on earth the lovely pair embrace !

XXVI.

THE WORLD.

(CONTINUED.)

Oh, sweetly-painful memory of YOUTH!
"I cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear!" nor see them melt to air,
Worn on the edge of Time's all-cankering tooth,
Nor gaze upon the wreck of hope and truth
And love, (the "triple league" of all things fair!)
Without such sorrow as I would not share
With my worst enemy, for pity and ruth!
And must I, then, my very *self* distrust?
And rightlier learn of my *own* breast to deem,
Moulded, as others are, of changing dust?
A Protean juggle, "rounded with a dream?"
If it be so, O Death! with timely thrust,
End me, while yet I *am* what yet I *seem*!

XXVII.

THE WORLD.

(CONTINUED.)

I would not grow, like some around I see,
The spectre of myself, my own soul's grave,
Wherein all feelings generous, frank, and brave,
Buried for evermore are doomed to be,
For all the treasures hid in earth and sea!
O God! to *Avarice* bind me not a slave!
From that, at least, my sinking spirit save—
Never 't wixt Mammon wavering and THEE!
Where are the joyous hearts mine yet remembers,
Ere that most "sabbathless" of fiends had bound them?
Alas! how changed from all that *once* I found them,
When their blithe May foretold no keen Decembers!
Now, doomed to worship, (e'en in their last embers,)
"Traffic, their God!" their God, who will "confound them!"*

* "Traffic is *your* God—and your God confound you!"

XXVIII.

THE WORLD.

TO ———

(CONCLUDED.)

Then—let me turn, oh, thou! the last and best
And dearest link of life's yet hallowed chain.
(Of all that were—of all that yet remain,)
To THEE! as worn-out Labour turns to Rest,
As the struck eagle to its far-off nest.
As fainting pilgrims to the shrine they gain!
To *thee*, whom yet I have not loved in vain.
Nor vainly tried by Love's most trying test.
Why art thou distant? Life is not for *thee*
“Mapped out” with drudgeries of daily need.
Leaving no spot of sunny leisure free
For Hope to brighten, or for Love to plead—
Alas! alas! far different 't is with *me*,
Whose *every* hour *some* task-work finds decreed!

XXIX.

FIRST TOKENS OF DECLINE.

“ In the midway of this our mortal life——”
DANTE.

He whom stern Time hath led (or dragged) along;
E'en but a little space beyond that line
From whence our human life is all decline.
Shall own, at length, that years have done him wrong;
And, though with mind *more* clear, and heart *as* strong,
Feel in his soul, as I, at length, in mine,
A growing wish *some* pleasures to resign,—
To shun the fiercer glare—the louder throng:
First symptom of decay! faint-tinged with sadness:
First gentle shadow of the steps of doom!
First gleam of the calm love of calmer gladness,
Of lighter toil—of milder beam and bloom;
The *cheer* of social life, without its madness—
The *calm* of solitude, without its gloom.

XXX.

DURHAM.

“ —Nothing in Britain more beautiful than Durham ! ”

SOUTHEY *to the Author.*

Monastic Durham ! girdled round and round
With Nature's beauty, like a verdant zone !
How fair thou sitt'st upon thy wooded throne—
How fair with pomp of Gothic structures crowned !
Well chose the saint who chose for holy ground
Thy undulating banks with bloom o'ergrown ;
He made, methinks, the loveliest scene his own
That ever saint or poet sought or found !
Of early piety the chosen spot.
Thee, too, hath Beauty made her choice domain :
Thy children *should* be pure if they are not ;
Soul-charmed from all the turbulence of gain !
As if some power “ remote from every stain
Of sordid industry had cast thy lot ! ”

XXXI.

TO MY KIND FRIEND, W. F. DURHAM.

"How seldom, friend, a good man here inherits
Honour or wealth, with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
If any man obtain that which he merits,
Or any merit that which he obtains!"

COLERIDGE.

Show me, my friend, where true desert *is not*,
And I will show where oft is heaped its meed:
Show me where lodges true desert indeed.
And I will show where lodges one forgot—
By those unjustly who the palm allot,
By those to whom unjustly 't is decreed.
Alas! no morbid riddle, hard to read,
But a deep truth, deep-felt in many a spot!

Now, if this humblest of all truthful lays,
(Proffering to *thee*, kind friend, such grateful praise,
As in my heart, if not my verse, shall live,)
To that ungenerous rule *exception* make—
Have thou, (so generously prompt to *give*,)
For once “the generosity to *take*.”*

* “La générosité de recevoir.”

LA BRUYERE.

XXXII.

TO MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND, ANNA —.

NEAR KESWICK.

"Inmate of a mountain dwelling!
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the summit of Helvellyn,
Awed, delighted, and amazed!"

WORDSWORTH.

A cottage home is thine, dear ANNA, now,
Amidst the mountains thou so oft hast clomb;
And meetly fitted for a cottage home
In purity and gentleness art thou!
Did Fancy coronal for *me* thy brow,
(As she is rich in privilege to roam
Unchecked by barrier-cliff or girdling foam.
And God alone her work can disallow,)
'T were with a mountain chaplet, fresh and green,
Of mountain ash, thick-wreathed with mountain flowers,
To speak thy love of Nature and her Powers;
And bid thee ever show, wherever seen,
Although a cottage maid, a mountain queen,
Dear to all hearts, as thou art dear to ours!

XXXIII.

TO THE SAME,

WHILST THE AUTHOR WAS ARRANGING THE MS. OF THESE VOLUMES.

Amidst whatever records of the past
(Its fears, hopes, joys, and *loves*, the most of all,)
These pages cherish—did they not recall
What sacred claim upon my heart *thou* hast,
With every glance upon their leaves I cast,
A gloom, methinks, reproachfully would fall :
They were as volumes writ with tears of gall,
Or things of veriest hollowness at last !
Thine oft, and earlier, had such tributes been,
But that the very love which made them due
On such a stem of dread affliction grew,
That thoughts *too* dread for song would intervene—
The shadow of A GRAVE, yet green and new,
Came evermore, and thrust itself between !

XXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

(CONTINUED.)

"I thought thou should'st have been my Hamlet's bride."

Oh, dear one! dearer haply than thou know'st,
If from *my* lips those mournful words are sighed,
"*I thought thou should'st have been my Hamlet's bride,*"
Thou wilt forgive my deep affliction's boast!
Remembering what my soul *once* treasured most
Of all earth's treasures heaped from far and wide!
And knowing that my life (*that* life denied!)
Of what it *was* is but the creeping ghost!
Oh, now for ever (breathed thus once to *thee*)
That thought, from every human ear apart,
Sole voice shall find within my own shut heart,
Nor there in vain a prisoner doomed to be;
For what, perchance, thou *might'st* have been to me
Gives tenfold zest of love to what thou art!

XXXV.

MY SISTERS.

Love hath few bonds more lovely or more sure,
In this stern world (so prone all love to smother),
Than those which link kind sister to kind brother ;
More lovely none—none likelier to endure.
Oh, ye who fain would build up love secure—
Build on a *sister's* breast, and not another !
It is as if the heart of our dead mother
Yet lived in theirs—deep, constant, firm, and pure.
Turbid with selfish aim, or jealous wrong,
And “ brackish with the salt of tears,” I see
Of other loves the fierce wave roll along ;
But, from the hearts of my loved sisters three,
What fountains of affection, clear and strong,
And warm and pure, have ever flowed for me !

XXXVI.

MY BROTHERS.

(CALCUTTA.)

The loved are still the distant—or the dead.
My Brothers! far, in life's fresh morn, away
To where the orient eyelids of the day
First lift their golden fringe, far, far ye sped.
The sea and land of half a world are spread
Betwixt us, and the cold hand of decay
May press on each, till all are worn and grey,
Ere in one mutual path again we tread,
If *ever* more! and Death no idle dart
For us hath poised! *One* thought alone consoles—
O LOVE! a never-dying guest thou art,
And hast been ever in our mutual souls!
"Twixt breasts by *THEE* so linked "no ocean rolls—
"T is but the eye and hand that are apart!"

XXXVII.

TO MY DEAR FRIEND, A ——— R W ——— R.

(AMERICA.)

“The friends of my youth—where are they?”

“Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Why art thou silent?”

WORDSWORTH.

The loved are still the distant—*or the dead.*

The DEAD! O word that swallows as a grave

Whate'er of earthly hope our spirits crave,

While yet this soil of earthly mould we tread!

I have laid low within its “narrow bed”

Whom most my yearning bosom sought to save.

While east, west, south, far o'er the severing wave,

How many are “the distant—*or the dead!*”

For like to death is silence, silence cold

And deep as Lethe's deep cold wave can be.

Frozen on lips that breathed such love of old.

O friend! if yet *thou* bravest life's stern sea,

And this remembrance ever dost behold,

Remember *him* who thus remembers *thee!*

XXXVIII.

THE TWO GRAVES.

LONDON, AUGUST 6, 1847.

"Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each."

SHELLEY; "*Adonais*."

From grave to grave, (O pilgrimage severe!)
With heavy steps, and heavier hearts, we trod;
And plucked the weeds from each sepulchral sod,
And wept above our dead with mutual tear.
Not that Affliction drove her sharpest spear
In either breast as when thy hand, O God,
Changed youth and beauty to "a kneaded clod,"
And blasted genius in the ripening ear!
Our tears, perchance, had more of balm than gall;
Our grief was neither anguish nor despair;
And yet the burden was enough to bear—
The memories we could not but recall!
And a blank sense of hollowness in all
That bloomed around so treacherously fair!

XL.

THE TWO GRAVES.

(CONTINUED.)

"These graves as yet are all too young and new."

Alas ! where'er the mattock turns the mould,
Are there not graves that *never* will grow old
In *some* remembering hearts—the faithful few ?
We cease at length to robe in inky hue,
But still Affliction keeps her icy hold,
And, long as eyes can weep or e'en behold,
Inexorably claims her bitter due !
Far hence be those who bid the heart believe
That time will soon its bitterest grief destroy—
That in the strongest chain our sorrows weave
Are many links of solacing alloy ;
'Tis *true*er solace that we still *can* grieve—
That grief is not a hollow thing like joy.

IMAGINARY INSCRIPTION

FOR

THE BURIAL-PLACE OF GRACE DARLING.

I.

Under this sepulchral stone,
With the dust of this lone spot,
Dust is mixing that shall not
(Though all tombs were overthrown)
Through long ages be forgot ;—
E'en for one brave deed alone.

II.

Here GRACE DARLING's relics moulder,
Bravest once on land or sea :
None in tempest braver, bolder ;

Calmer none in calm than she—
Till thou learn'st her tale from me,
Pass not by, oh, mute beholder!
If the cold earth proud could be,
E'en the grave were proud to hold her!

III.

Once, around her sire's wild dwelling,
Night and storm, in terror clad,
Raved like struggling demons yelling,
E'en as wind and wave were mad;
Or as in their fierce rebelling
Human hate and wrath they had!
Then, oh! then, amidst their raving,
In the dead hour, wild and dark,
Far from hope of mortal saving,
Perished a devoted bark!

IV.

Terrors, horrors, pangs severe,

None may tell save those who braved them !

Stranded on an islet drear,

Where the black rocks scarce o'er-caved them ;

And cold, hunger, anguish, fear,

Soon, without a knell, had graved them,

Had not SHE who slumbers here

Like an angel rushed and saved them !

V.

Woman shrieked, and man grew paler.

Gazing hopeless each on each ;

Childlike lay the hardiest sailor

Helpless on the craggy beach,

Through whose dark cliffs, breach on breach,

Over each despairing wailer

Burst the billowy assailer !

Who that dreadful isle could reach ?
Whom but God could they beseech ?

VI.

Yet, upon the storm-blast (laden
With all hideous sounds that be)
Rose the accents of a maiden—
“ Oh, my father, haste with me !
God, who sees us, will direct us ;
God, who hears us, will protect us,
Even across this stormy sea ! ”
Then the old man blessed his daughter,
And they braved the roaring water !

VII.

Their humanity's devotion,
And the glory it hath shed
O'er that stormy Northern ocean,
(Charnel of the shipwrecked dead !)

Long as Pity's sweet emotion
Triumphs over selfish dread,
Long as Valour's heart assuages
Terror where the great deep rages,
How they toiled, and how they sped,
In their country's proudest pages
Shall delightedly be read !

VIII.

But to HER—the true and tender—
Her, the only generous one.
Who could see no moral splendour
In the brave deed she had done ;
Chief to her the heart shall render
Oft and oft, and o'er and o'er,
All that gratitude can tender
To the good for evermore !

Still, in dreams of sadness, o'er her
Love shall hold his vigils wan,
And the brave and kind deplore her
As a kindred spirit gone.

IX.

Hers shall be each maiden's blessing,
Whose beloved one roams the deep ;
And, with fervid heart-caressing,
He her memory too shall keep.
" Whom the heavens love well, *die early*,"
Solemnly was said of old :
Timely snatched from earth's vain hurley,
From a world austere and cold ;—
Maiden ! where *thy* tale is told,
And thy death in early youth,
Deep shall sink the moral's truth !

x.

Names depart, and few repine
When they fade ; but wheresoever
Oceans rage and beacons shine,
There shall be a power in *thine*
O'er oblivion for ever !
E'en its very sound shall cherish
Courage on the stormiest sea,
Nor, for lack of gallant daring,
When the blast the surge is tearing,
Shall one strauded victim perish,
On the wildest reefs that be !
Were the human soil more sterile
Than the meanest hearts we see,
There should spring a scorn of peril
With the memory of thee !

xi.

Playmate of the roaring water,
And of each wild blast that blew !

Ocean's bride, and Peril's daughter,
 Heroine-like, yet child-like too!
Round thy once glad habitation, .
 By the wild Fern's shrubless heads,
Now the foot of desolation
 Still more desolately treads ;
 But the beauty and the glory
 Poured from thy undying story,
Such a gleam of consecration
 O'er their arid bleakness sheds,
As for ever shall defy
All the rage of sea and sky !

XII.

Proud Romance her heroine beauties,
 When thou 'rt named, shall boast no more ;
For the humblest cares and duties
 Heaped at Fortune's humblest door
Thy calm equal spirit bore

(Startled nights and toiling days)
With a pure unbroken meekness,
Far from all admiring gaze;
Where, in lone and silent bleakness,
There was none to see or praise.

XIII.

Now sleep sound, thou gallant maiden !
Never more with watchful eyes,
When the fierce winds, terror-laden,
Howl along the wintry skies,
Never more shalt thou arise
To the beacon's lonely height,
Fancying far-off shipwrecked cries
In each wild voice of the night !
Thou art gone where storm nor terror
Challenge Pity's aid or balm,
Where nor voice of night or error
Breaks the everlasting calm !

Good and brave ! too soon departed !
May thy fervid spirit dwell
Where the true and generous hearted
Reap their harvest long and well !

XIV.

Sire bereft, and mourning mother !
Beaconing yet the stormy tide,
Grief is yours that mocks all other,
Grief that stills all grief beside :
Grief no echoing of *a name*
From the proudest rolls of Fame
In the stricken heart can smother.
Yet, within your mournful dwelling,
Ever beat by wind and surge,
Though in bitterness repelling
All the solace pride can urge,
Midst all *human* comfort's dearth,
Let this hope of *loftier* birth

Pour its rich consoling leaven,
That your lost one's praise on earth
Echoes too from lips in Heaven!

xv.

Now, upon thy saddened way,
Stranger! pass with deeper musing:
From the record of decay
O'er this mound of hallowed clay,
Thoughts that will not pass away
In thy chastened heart infusing;
Mindful thou hast trod the earth
In whose honoured breast doth lie
All of sweetness, valour, worth,
That can ever wholly die!

Nov. 1842.

RECOLLECTION OF A LADY IN *** ABBEY.

"She sat within the abbey-walls."

BALLAD.

"A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head,
From some odd corner of the brain:
It haunted me the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times."

TENNYSON.

"She sat within the abbey-walls"—

What spirit that forgotten strain
Thus to my ear and lip recalls
With iteration fond and vain?

What link of what mysterious chain

Hath Fancy touched, that still there falls
In accents soft, yet full and plain,

“She sat within the abbey-walls”?

Never till now the hackneyed words

I cared to say, or sing, or hear;
The simplest song of simplest birds
To me were melody as dear.

Yet *now*, as from the lips of some

Lone phantom that the Past recalls,
Full on the heart’s quick ear they come,
“She sat within the abbey-walls”!

Is there some “tricksy spirit” nigh?

Some “Esprit follet,” like to him
Who played such “pilfering pranks” and sly
With Tasso in his dungeon grim?

Some busy Puck? some restless Fay?

Some Elf that *teazes*, not appals,
And only thus will sing or say,

“She sat within the abbey-walls”!

Dissembler! cease: Nor fay nor elf

Hath laid a hand on Fancy's rein;
Thou know'st (none better than thyself)
The secret of this haunting strain!

While Memory from her sparkling urn

That form—that face—that scene recalls,
Well may a strain so apt return—

“She sat within the abbey-walls”!

Oh, ye, the wise! who never yet

A moment peeped behind Love's scenes,
Your wisdom 't would but vainly fret
To guess what all this mystery means.

No memory of time or place
To *you* a happy dream recalls
Of one, with lovely form and face,
Who "sat within the abbey-walls"!

But thou! oh, thou, with raven tress,
And eyes that were a joy to see,
And lips that once—e'en once to press,
Were joy above all joys to me!
Thy heart can tell what gentle spell
That else forgotten strain recalls;
As mine shall treasure long and well
Who "sat within the abbey-walls"!

THE WOODLAND GLADE.

Again my dreaming heart recalls
A dream of that sweet maid
Who "sat within the abbey-walls,"
In Beauty's light arrayed ;
And now my dreaming heart would tell
Where *next* on me the radiance fell—
A lovely spot, remembered well,
In yonder woodland glade.

Now gently hail, thou woodland glade,
Now gently hail to thee !
May'st thou, in leafy pride arrayed,
A thousand summers see !
For one sweet spot beneath thy shade
That is most dear to me.

"I was there—(oh, well that summer morn
Might all things brightly seem
To laugh away, " with playful scorn,"
The mist from vale and stream,
As though of Love and Summer born,
And cradled in a dream !)

"I was there I met the loveliest glance
(The *loveliest* I avow !)
That ever sent in stormy dance
My blood from heart to brow !
Or memory, in delighted trance,
Can image to me now !

A glance with subtlest magic fraught,
Of all sweet spells combined
That e'er to loveliest eyes were taught
By loveliest heart and mind !
If through the world its peer ye sought,
Its peer ye would not find !

O glance ! on Fancy's gaze that falls

'Midst all the haunts of men,

As erst " within the abbey-walls,"

Nor lovelier even then—

Here best her lovely light recalls

Thy loveliness again.

Where yonder darting sun-ray breaks

'Twixt dancing bough and bough,

And chequer-work, all golden, makes,

Methinks I see it now !

O glade ! in whom such beauty wakes,

How beautiful art thou !

Thy summer glory may'st thou keep

Through many an age to be !

And dews of nursing freshness steep

Thy every flower and tree !

As I, in dews of memory deep,

Will nurse sweet thoughts of thee !

Hither at midnight did I speed,
 Though moon and stars were not,
A light from out my heart would lead
 To *one* remembered spot ;
And memory must be wrecked indeed
 When *that* shall be forgot !

Yet why, oh, heart of fond Romance !
 Why thus, in flower and tree,
To feed an idle passion's trance,
 Such food for passion see ?
Why reck the love in that sweet glance
 If 't was not love for thee ?

“ WE’LL GO NO MORE A ROVING BY THE
LIGHT OF THE MOON!”

If the heart be still as loving—

(Heaven’s best and sweetest boon!)

Shall we “go no more a roving

By the light of the moon?”

Tell the tale to wretches creeping

Cold and trembling to the tomb;

To the captive, darkly keeping

Vigils black with dungeon gloom;

To the miser, ever heaping

Treasures bought with many a groan ;

To ambition, ever reaping

All the whirlwinds it hath sown !

Roses, yet all brightly blowing.

Who but gathers while he may ?

Who from streams yet freshly flowing

Turns to desert sands away ?

If the spirit *must* surrender

All its buoyant pride at length,

And the eye forego its splendour,

And the clasping arm its strength—

And the lips, so sweet in pressing,

Change to things no longer sweet,

And the bosom in caressing

Give no longer beat for beat—

If “all that’s bright” *must* perish

By the cold and common doom,

And each dream we loved to cherish

Melt away in sullen gloom—

And "Decay's effacing finger"

Blight the garland on each brow.

Then, the rather, *while* they linger,

Let us wreath them freshly now!

While the eye we love still glances

Upon ours its wonted flame,

While the blood yet bounds and dances

Through the yet rejoicing frame,

While the heart is "still as loving,"

All its tender chords in tune,

We will "go again a roving

By the light of the moon!"

“WHERE SHALL WE ROAM, DEAR MAID?”

LYRIC.

Where shall we roam, dear maid ?

Through the dim silent glade,

Under the forest shade,

Sweetly to dwell ?

In the calm valley's hush,

By the fount's stilly gush ?

Or the wild torrent's rush ?

Tell me, oh, tell !

In those dear eyes I see

Answer divine to me—

“ Even in chains with thee

How sweet to dwell !

Where gleams the sparry grot, ,

Where blooms the floral spot,

Lovely where Love is not ?

Tell me, oh, tell !”

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST ;

(A NEW VERSION)

OR, THE PET FROG.

“—— A fit of sprightly malice.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ Severe shall be my speech, as in her deeds
Is she—the rock so beautiful and cold !”

DANTE ; *Canzone 4th.*

Strange fits and fancies ladies take !

If one may dare, for once, to say

A truth which they contrive to make

So clear a hundred times a day !

In choice of *human* favourites, some

Odd whims they have that make one furious ;

And in their choice of favourites *dumb*,

Are e'en, if possible, *more* curious !

One of *my* circle fair, at least,
Has ta'en in her especial keeping
The most unheard-of hideous beast
That ever set one's flesh a-creeping!

Of beast, or bird—cat, owl, canary—
Monkies, from apes to marmosets—
Of almost all things, furred or hairy,
I can conceive them making *pets*;

I can conceive their gentle wishes
Stretching to things with claws or scales;
I can conceive that golden fishes
Have very fascinating tails:

I can conceive a darling bird;
I can conceive a darling dog,
But in my life I never heard
Before of any darling *frog*!

Fancy a pretty lady thinking

That spotted, speckled, slimy horror—

That bloated filth, up-swollen with drinking,

The only *pet* that's proper for her!

Fancy a pretty lady calling

That squatting, croaking "rowley-poley,"

That "waddling, wide-mouthed" monster sprawling,

Her "*chère Petite*," her "*Mignon joli*!"

To see a fair one pet a *hog*,

Perhaps one might be rather vexed;

But she who pets a darling *frog*,

Should have a darling scorpion next!

A frog? why not a handsome TOAD?

Poets and Naturalists have said,

Though it spits venom in your road,

It "wears a jewel in its head."

Why not a SNAKE? *that* bright, smooth thing?

Eve liked the friendship when she'd formed it—

You've but to teach one *not* to sting

The nursing bosom that has warmed it!

Strange world to choose a female friend in!

And it seems hard (to say the least)

That our best dreams of such should end in

This farce of "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST!"

THE MUSIC-VICTIM.

A TRUE TALE.

“This music mads me! let it sound no more!”

SHAKSPEARE; *Richard II.*

[The “heroine” of the following verses died of rapid consumption, rendered *more* rapid by the heartless *music-madness* of her family. The subject was given to the writer many years ago, by a lady who *saw* the “victim” of this *worse* than madness sinking under her cruel task-work; and to whom she, one day, really uttered the concluding words of the last stanza.]

I.

So young and fair—so worn and weak—

So wan, and thin, and cold!

And by the hectic on her cheek

How sad a tale is told!

With lips that have not yet complained,

But sigh and sing by mournful fits,

As if to yonder music chained,

How deathlike there she sits!

II.

“ Now rest thee, poor pale Madelin,
Now rest awhile, I pray,
And give thy fingers wan and thin
Some little holiday—
Four hours on bitter morns like these,
And *yet* the weary task not done!
But still upon those icy keys
Thy cold wan fingers run !

III.

“ ’T is well to play, ’t is well to sing,
In genial hour and clime ;
And music is a lovely thing
In fitting place and time :
But not on shivering morns like these,
Remote from cheering fire or sun,
From hour to hour on those cold keys
Should thy cold fingers run !”

IV.

Her low, sweet voice sad answer gave—
 “ Yes, I am wan, and worn, and thin,
And cold as that expecting grave
 That soon will shut me in !
And happier *then* these tearless eyes,
 And ~~happier~~ *there* this sleeping clay,
That none can bid from sleep arise,
 With cold thin hands to play !

V.

“ But ‘ play, play, play,’ the live-long day,
 And ‘ practise, practise,’ late and soon.
Is all I hear my father say
 From July on to June.
And when my shrunk and shivering form
 My keen and watchful mother sees,
She bids me ‘ play till I am warm’
 Upon these icy keys !

VI.

“ My teacher comes, severe and stern,
And cold of mood and speech ;
And I for sickness cannot learn,
Nor he for anger teach.
My eyes that grow more dim and dim,
My frame that grows more weak and weak,
He sees ; but what are they to him ?
Or this poor sunken cheek ?

VII.

“ My sister, she is glad and strong,
Her heart no portion hath in mine,
Ambitious only 'midst the throng
Of festive rooms to shine.
HER in the pride of health they see,
O'erjoyed to dance, and play, and sing,
And then they turn to gaze on *me*—
A silent, sickly thing !

VIII.

“ There *was* a time—ah, happy time,
That never, never more shall be—
When simplest air and simplest rhyme
Gave ecstasy to me ;
When by the side of one who played
The humblest pipe with humblest power.
My happy footsteps would have strayed,
Or danced for many an hour !

IX.

“ Now, oh, the change ! the ruined spell !
The broken charm to heart and ear !
Yon old church organ’s dirge-like swell
Alone I love to hear ;
And *that* my spirit still commands,
Because ’t will play a requiem o’er
My ‘ narrow bed,’ when these poor hands
Are stretched to play no more.

X.

“ Soon I depart where nightly moans
And daily tears for ever cease,
And these distracting chords and tones
Shall leave my soul at peace.
Oh, quickly come, thou welcome hearse!
Oh, quickly come, thou welcome bier!
And take away the *tuneful curse*
That weighs upon me here !

XI.

“ Fly thou, O Death ! on fleeter wings—
In thee and in my God I trust !
None in *thy* mansion plays or sings ;
There is no *teaching* in the dust !
Though angels sing and play above.
(If rightly thus our souls are taught,)
There is, in *their* pure world of love,
‘ Thank God ! no music TAUGHT ! ’ ”

STANZAS.

COMPOSED ON A DECEMBER NIGHT AT SEA, BETWEEN
LIVERPOOL AND THE ISLE OF MAN.

Thus tossed upon the wintry Deep,
While wave and wind alike are high,
In vain I strive to rest or sleep—
They sing too loud a lullaby.

The dim lamp shows the cabin heaving
Upward and downward, o'er and o'er,
And, stretched around, the sick and grieving.
All pining for the dear, dear shore !

And nought I hear but wild winds wreaking
Over the surge their howling spite ;
And straining bulk-heads, groaning, creaking,
And—*other* sounds as charming quite !

But why, on bleak December's billow,
 I brave the weather's stormy stress,
And court a sick and sleepless pillow,
 Would puzzle many a plain man's guess !

“ Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean,”
 Is very fine in ode or sonnet,
But not so pleasant is the motion
 Of rolling sea when you 're upon it.

Oh, thou that hid'st dear MONA long *
 From those who roam the wild Deep thus,
To-night be merciful as strong,
 And hide not MONA long from *us* !

December 19th, 1839.

* See Note, page 280, Vol. I.

VERSICLES

(FOR FATHERS AND MOTHERS ONLY)

ON MY INFANT DAUGHTER'S FIRST WALKING.

"She walks in beauty."

BYRON.

I.

Ha ! ambitious little elf !

Off by thy adventurous self ?

Fairly off ? O fair betide thee !

With no living thing beside thee :

Not a leading string to guide thee :

Not a chair to creep or crawl by :

Not a cushioned stool to fall by :

Not a finger-tip to catch at ;
Not a sleeve or skirt to snatch at ;
Fairly off at length to sea,
Full twelve inches (can it be
Really, truly ?) from the lee
Of mamma's protecting knee !

II.

Fair and softly—soft and fairly—
Little bark, thou sail'st it rarely,
In thy new-born power and pride,
O'er the carpet's level tide,
Lurching, though, from side to side,
Ever and anon, and heeling
Like a tipsy cherub reeling,
(If e'en cherubs, saucy gypsy !
Smile like thee, or e'er get tipsey !)

Even as though yon dancing mote
In the sunny air afloat,
Or the merest breath that met thee,
Might suffice to upset thee !

III.

Helm a-weather ! steady, steady !
— Nay, the danger 's past already ;
Thou, with gentle course, untroubled,
Table-Cape full well hast doubled,
Sofa-Point hast shot a-head,
Safe by Footstool-Island sped,
And art steering, well and truly,
On for Closet-Harbour duly !

IV.

Anchor now, or turn in time.
Ere within the torrid clime

Which the tropic fender bounds,
And with brazen zone surrounds ;
Turn thee, weary little vessel,
Nor with further perils wrestle :
Turn thee, to refit awhile
In the sweetly sheltering smile
Of thine own Maternal Isle—
In the haven of dear rest
Proffered by the doating breast
And the ever ready knee
Of a mother true to thee
As the best of mothers be !

v.

Nay ! adventurous little ship !
If thine anchor 's still a-trip,
And, instead of port, you choose
Such another toilsome cruise,

Wheresoe'er the whim may lead thee,
On! my treasure! and God speed thee!
Hackneyed as, perchance, they be,
Solemn words are these to me,
Nor from an irreverent lip
Heedlessly or lightly slip:
Even HE whose name I take
Thus, my dear one, for thy sake,
In this seeming idle strain,
Knows I take it not "in vain,"
But as in a parent's prayer
Unto HIM, to bless and spare!

“THE STRUGGLE IS O’ER.”

The struggle is o’er, we have parted !

And my fate may rush now to its goal,
For the last of thy glances hath darted

That ever shall dart to my soul !

Like a dream that the morning scatters,

Like a flame that is quenched to a spark,

Like a film that the least breath shatters,

Hope is gone, and my soul grows dark.

Not that, e’en in the height of its madness,

My spirit e’er dreamed it could be

Crowned and robed with the glory and gladness

Of an answering passion from thee ;

If nor reason, nor prudence, nor duty,

Had cried to the proud hope "forbear!"

Every glance on thy youth and thy beauty

Had frozen it o'er with despair!

I but dreamed—(oh, the sweet dreams that perish!)

That such love might be mine in thy breast

As the dearest of sisters might cherish

For a brother beloved o'er the rest—

That with looks and with tones glad-hearted,

Thou might'st greet me when lonely we met.

And the gleam of a tear when we parted

Tell the tale of a parting regret.

But we part, and no shadow of sorrow

On thy brow, in thy glance, do I see,

And there never shall waken the morrow

That shall waken thy least sigh for me!

So the trust that too proudly invaded
A spirit not often too proud,
From its last lone recesses hath faded,
As the sun's dying rays from a cloud !

Then go—it is meet we should sever,
And the slave break away from his chain,
And my lip bid adieu, and for ever,
To all that my soul loves in vain !
Oh ! hardest of lessons to learn !
From the wreck of crushed hope to arise ;
But the love which thou canst not return
Thou shalt never, oh ! never, despise !

From the lip that no more may caress thee,
From the lip thou wilt never caress,
Take the farewell-thoughts that bless thee
As only the loved we bless !

On thy paths may the heavens above thee
Scatter flowers even lovelier yet,
And on him who hath dared thus to love thee
The merciful boon—to forget !

1846.

STANZAS.

As one from delirium waking,
With spirit nor fettered nor free,
Half reason, half madness, partaking,
I awake from my visions of THEE !

O visions, so fatally cherished !
O visions that e’en to the last
Seem dearer than all that have perished
Of hope and of joy through the past !

While my heart keeps its tenderest yearning,
While my fancy yet roams earth and sky,
While my soul yet unclouded is burning,
Why fade they for ever? oh! why?

Vain question! ask flow'rets, storm-scattered,
Why their bloom and their fragrance is o'er?
Ask the harp of the minstrel, when shattered,
Why it utters sweet music no more!

Yet, though not at my bidding they vanish,
Nor stoop them to reason's controul,
What my soul cannot utterly banish
Shall at least not be *Lord* of my soul!

Nor the world, ever joyous in claiming
A victim for obloquy's shrine,
And to tread down the heart with defaming,
Tread e'en for an instant on mine!

Let me feel as the fallen Rinaldo
Felt the pride of his manhood upbraid him,
When he gazed on the shield of Ubaldò,
And saw what his passion had made him !

1846.

LOVE AND PARTING.

“ Separated love is hell on earth.”

TIECK.

I feel, since that most heavy hour
When parting sorrow crushed my heart.
That sorrow is the only dower
Time cannot wring from love apart :
I feel that life and love are *one*,
That *mine* asunder cannot be.
That I must love till life be done,
Or life will not be life to me !

It is not life to breathe and walk,
To laugh, to feast, to sleep, and wake ;
The rose upon its broken stalk
Less lifeless life may well partake !
Still let me love ! oh, still, my heart,
Cling thou to love, as life to thee !
Though youth, and joy, and hope, depart,
Love, only love, is life to me !

“AND WHY ? MY STARTLED SPIRIT ASKS.”

1.

“ And why,” my startled spirit asks,
“ This gleam of hope that o’er me steals ?”
In vain Remembrance thus it tasks,
Her mournful page no cause reveals :

And yet, a load hath left my brow,
My “bosom’s lord” more “lightly sits,”
And through my soul, methinks, e’en now,
A calm consoling angel flits.

II.

It whispers me, benignly sweet,
“The pure of heart shall conquer pain,
And e’en though never more they meet
They have not met or mourned in vain :
For love, by agony refined,
Triumphant even o’er despair,
In the wrung heart shall leave behind
No pangs but those ’t is proud to bear !”

III.

Pervading, softening, strengthening Power,
Still in my bosom live and reign,
And keep it as a virgin-tower
No sordid passion e’er shall gain !

And THOU, for whom I thus endure,
 Though lost for evermore to me,
 How can I nurse a thought impure,
 With every thought firm fixed on *thee*!

THE FEATURES.

That mortals are made up of quarrelsome clay,
 My tale, I imagine, will prove as it goes,
 For the features composing the visage, one day,
 Most cruelly fell to abusing the Nose.
 First the LIPS took it up, and their reason was this,
 That the Nose is a bane both to beauty and love,
 And they never (moreover) in comfort could *kiss*
 For that horrid protuberance jutting above.

Then EYES, not behind in the matter to be,

With a sparkle began, as I've oftentimes seen 'em,

And vowed it was perfectly shocking to see

Such a lump of deformity sticking between 'em !

The CHEEKS (with a blush) said, " the frightfulest shade,

By the Nose, o'er their bloom and their beauty was
thrown,"

And EARS could n't bear the loud trumpeting made

Whenever that troublesome member was *blown* !

So, 't was moved, and agreed, without dallying more,

To thrust the intruder at once from the face ;

But NOSE, hearing this, most indignantly swore

" By the breath of his nostrils, he'd stick to his place !"

Then, addressing the EYES, he went learnedly through

His defence, and inquired " when their vigour was
gone,

Pray, what would their worships for *spectacles* do,

If the Face had no Nose to hang spectacles *on* ?

“Mankind,” he observed, “loved their *scent* as their *sight*,

Or who 'd care a farthing for myrtles and roses?

And the charge of the LIPS was as frivolous quite,

For, if LIPS fancied kissing, pray why might n't *Noses*?

As for *Ears*,” (and, in speaking, NOSE scornfully curled,)

“*Their* murmurs were equally trifling and teasing,

And not all the Ears, Eyes, or Lips in the world

Should keep him unblown, or prevent him from
sneezing!

“To the CHEEKS,” he contended, “he acted as *screen*,

And guarded them oft from the wind and the weather,

And, but that he stood like a landmark between,

The Face had been nothing but *Cheek altogether*!”

With eloquence thus he repelled their abuse,

With logical clearness defining the case,

And from thence came the saying, so frequent in use,

That an argument's plain *as the nose on your face*!

SONNETS

WRITTEN IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM,

1846.

I.

NEAR GUINES.—PAS DE CALAIS.

Is *this* the gay and lightsome land of Francee ?
Is *this* the region where, on tip-toe springing,
And fruits and flowers o'er every pathway flinging,
Joy and Abundance crown the bright expanse ?
Where, as in glittering realms of old romance,
Men, maids, and birds, alike are ever singing ?
And blithest minstrelsy for ever ringing,
Speeds life away in ceaseless song and dance ?
Behold ! and listen !—silence, dead and deep,
Reigns o'er the fertile landscape far around ;
No song of bird ;—of man nor sight, nor sound ;
Field, wood, and stream, their voiceless stillness keep :
No carriage rolls ; the very windmills sleep,
As if a spell their idle wands had bound !

II.

TO MY DAUGHTER.

PARTING.

A little while, my treasure, my sole child,
(O thou, sole left of all that *were* so dear!)
A little while, that yet must long appear,
I leave thee ; but with chastened grief and mild—
Grief by a trust in God so well beguiled,
And a deep sense that all who guard thee here
Their sacred charge will sacredly revere,
Already is my heart half reconciled.
Yet ne'er before for such a dreary space
Have we been sundered, and the hours will crawl
Slowly away till I behold thy face
Again, my dear one ! dearest now of all
That on the earth could make me smile or weep !
Upon thy head may every blessing fall,
Thy father prays, with fervour pure and deep !

III.

BRUSSELS.

“There was a sound of revelry by night—”

CHILDE HAROLD.

And this is Brussels ! this the city fair
That felt the terrors of Napoleon's nod,
And shook, as if the vengeance of a God,
And not of man, hung threatening in the air !
This was the island-lion's martial lair,
From whence to fearful victory he trod,
Heaped thousands weltering on the bloody sod,
And taught THE WORLD a lesson—*to beware.*
Now, the blithe Boulevard, and the salon bright,
The gilded café, and the crowded mart,
Tell that the fearful ones are feared no more,
And all looks gay as on that festive night
When Beauty danced with Valour, till the roar
Of the loud cannon thundered them apart !

IV.

BRUSSELS.

(CONTINUED.)

Perchance this very room's now peaceful wall
Echoed the prayers of some distracted soul,
Mother, or wife, or sister, when the roll
Of the presaging drum, or bugle-call,
Summoned her dear one forth—perchance her *all*—
And, o'er the martial din arising sole,
Deadly, and clear, she heard a death-bell toll,
Prophetic of the carnage to befall!
I cannot sleep: in vain from many a tower
Deep midnight sends its solemn voice anew,
The Genius of the place defies the hour,
As if *my* ear were requiem-haunted too!
Imagination grows a mightier Power,
And speeds to *thee*, “thou deadly WATERLOO!”

V.

THE WOOD OF SOIGNEE.

" No cheerful woodland this of antique trees,
With thickets varied, and with sunny glade :
Look where he will, the weary traveller sees
One gloomy, thick, impenetrable shade."

SOUTHEY.

The gloomiest wood that e'er in old romance,
Or mythic legend, gloomiest that may be,
(With drear enchantments hung on every tree,)
Saw spectral shapes beneath its shadows dance
Round some belated pilgrim of mischance,
Who shrieked or shuddered their wild rites to see,
Methinks were sylvan cheerfulness to *thee*,
Dark Soignee, stretched in drear and stern expanse !
Thy sullen verdure, greyly green and dank,
Seems less allied to bloom than funeral blight.
In *thee* no merry elf plays wanton prank,
No lover's meeting hallows the calm night ;
No elf-queen sleeps upon the wild-thyme bank,
" Lulled in sweet dreams with dances and delight !"

VI.

THE WOOD OF SOIGNEE.

(CONTINUED.)

With wreathed fantastic roots, no beeches old
Within thy melancholy glades appear;
No "oaks that have outlived the eagle" rear
Their huge mossed trunks and gnarlèd branches bold;
No arcades immemorial we behold,
Such as where Ardennes' hunters threw the spear.
And pensive Jacques mourned his wounded deer,
Or Timon dug for roots, and drew forth gold.
But thou, grey, glimmering wood! replicst well,
That, whatsoe'er thine aspect, thou dost vie,
In haughty record of what once befell,
With all earth's haughtiest annals can supply!
Thou saw'st the bravest of her brave sweep by,
When *he*, the mightiest of her mighty, fell!

VII.

WATERLOO.—THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

“The lamb shall with the lion couch.” Oh, when?
Behold this deadly field of Waterloo!
Are men grown angels since the sword they drew
E’en here, for butchery of their fellow-men?
Or would they play that dreadful game again,
And drench the world with blood and tears anew?
They would, if history in aught be true;
And pile their hecatombs e’en now, as then.
Yet all is calm; and, whether free or slaves,
Men plough, and sow, and reap, the long year through;
And never yet a richer harvest grew
Than now o’er all this fatal region waves—
As if Earth felt (and *marked* the feeling, too)
A teeming joy in her ten thousand graves!

VIII.

HOUGOMONT.

Bare, blackened, charred, dismantled, roofless—lo !
The wreck of Hougomont from shell and ball.
Though tower, fosse, bastion, battlement, yea, all
Science, the strong, to man, the weak, can show,
To baffle speediest rage, or malice slow,
Oft shame their builders with a ruining fall,
Here, the poor rampart of an orchard-wall
Was as an Ehrenbreitstein 'gainst the foe !
Who stood ? who fell ? in these low tombs who rests ?
What portion of the indomitable heart
Of England, throbbing in a few staunch breasts,
Which here defied rage, numbers, valour, art ?
All now is still, save where the swallows dart
Around the ruined eaves from their calm nests.

IX.

HOUGOMONT.

(CONTINUED.)

THE CHAPEL.

The humble are the safe—the weak the strong :
When falls the stricken oak the flower is spared.
This modest pile e'en yet stands unimpaired,
Save by neglect's sole-desecrating wrong.
Here swells no more the voice of sacred song ;
No altar soars ; roof, pavement, walls, are bared ;
And, like a thing for which no heart hath cared,
The Calvaire* on the earth is flung along.
Yet, where religion hath been doomed to cease,
One lingering superstition sways instead—
That the fierce flames, when hitherward they spread,
And thus far raged with terrible increase,
Stayed at the foot of the meek Prince of Peace,
As the wild waters once obeyed his tread !

* *Calvaire*, image of the crucified Saviour.

X.

DEATH-PLACE OF PICTON.

Here pause ; or move with reverential tread ;
And let thine eyes, and let thy spirit, dwell
Upon the sod where gallant PICTON fell,
Even here—oh, earth how honoured by the dead !
What honours *him* ? what trophies here are spread ?
What bust, or urn, the trump of Fame to swell ?
The man, the glory, and the spot, to tell ?
Nothing ! Yon crumbling road-post serves instead.
Now, were I wealthy—(and, for this alone,
Some generous hearts may grieve that I am not !)—
I would not turn from this so-hallowed spot
Till I beheld its first recording stone
Deep laid—a structure ne'er to be o'erthrown,
And only with the world to be forgot !

XI.

THE VANQUISHED.

“Je les tiens! Je les tiens! ces Messieurs Anglais!”

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

“Ah! ces chevaux gris—que sont ils?”

NAPOLEON.

Where stood NAPOLEON? Let me tread the spot
 Where He, who trod upon the world, beheld
 The world fall from him! saw his eagles quelled,
 And their heroic bearers left to rot
 In shallow Belgian graves—oh, humbling lot!
 Oh, dream of empire dismally dispelled!
 Himself, earth's proudest, loftiest cedar, felled
 For ever, with one blow, and pitied not!
 Was it from hence the mighty monarch cast
 Th' imperial glance o'er all his dread array,
 And, as red England gathered far and fast,
 Exulting cried “*I have them, then, at last,*
These English!” ‘till the fiery “horses grey,”
 And thousands, brave and terrible as they,
 Whirled the proud boast a leaf before the blast!

XII.

THE VICTOR.

“ ——— All that most endears
Valour, is when the myrtle wreathes the sword.”

BYRON.

“ Hail to the victor !” evermore the cry
Poured from the lip of the loud world’s acclaim,
Whoe’er is victor in war’s dreadful game—
Whate’er is staked upon its dreadful die !
Though all that hallows, in the Eternal eye,
Battle, when purest, into virtuous fame,
Heroic monsters give to sword and flame,
“ Hail to the victor !” still rends earth and sky !
England ! my country ! let that cry in *thee*,
Voiced by thy millions, be forgotten never !
Nor one of thousand pœans yet to be
To thy *true* Hero, whose august endeavour
Was for “ true glory’s stainless victory,”
Thy glory, and thy WELLINGTON’S, for ever !

XIII.

HUMANITY.

Yet, whoso treads this memorable field.
Exulting only in the deadly blow
Which here his country struck her deadliest foe,
And with a heart 'gainst all compunction steeled
For those deep wounds which never, never healed
In thousand, thousand bosoms, withering slow,
(Martyrs of victory, or of overthrow,
Whose loss no pompous chronicle revealed,
Nor, o'er their dear ones, trophy, tomb, or bust,
Arose to tell how gallantly they died)—
In *him* let patriot virtue have no trust,
In *him* let patriot valour have no pride ;
For he hath dashed humanity aside.
And treads like common clay this human dust !

XIV.

HUMANITY.

(CONTINUED.)

But he that, by a loftier spirit led,
Though mindful ever of his country's claim
To that most haughty wreath of martial fame,
Is mindful, too, of e'en the humblest dead
Who on this Golgotha of Europe bled,
And feels the pulse of martial pride grow tame
With Pity's sweet remorse, half grief, half shame,
At thought of the wide carnage here outspread—
Him, as with pace of awful reverence drear,
(Brooding o'er mortal life, at best a span!)
He treads the soil through whose soaked harvest ran
Rivers of blood upon that day of fear—
Him let his country and his kind revere,
The *world's* compatriot! man's true brother-man!

XV.

BRUSSELS.

THE FETE DE LA VILLE.—THE CATHEDRAL, ST. GUDULE—
HIGH MASS; TE DEUM.

Meek, frugal, gentle, void of state and show—
Shrinking from grandeur's every sordid lure—
Of spirit humble—of affections pure,
Anchored on high when tempest-tossed below—
These once were Christian attributes; e'en so
(If but one truthful record yet endure
In history's page, belief to re-assure)
Ran the blessed bead-roll, thousand years ago.
Then shrank the wealthy from their perilous lot.
As from a gilded bait of wrath and shame—
Then prayer arose from humblest cell and grot.
And songs of praise to HIM, in meet acclaim,
Whose spirit made a temple of each spot
“Where two or three were gathered in his name!”

XVI.

BRUSSELS.

(CONTINUED.)

Behold this stateliest of religious piles!
Far as a sound is heard, or glimpse is seen,
From the high portals to the altar-screen,
With armed warriors thronged in glittering files!
A martial clangour rings along the aisles.
And trumpet-blasts the loud hymns shrill between!
While round a stately monarch and his queen
All that delights or awes each sense beguiles.
Now, is this gorgeous pageant I behold,
This bannered pomp, with priests ranged far and near,
Is it, as WORDSWORTH'S solemn verse hath told,
"Sacred Religion, mother of form and fear?"
Or that which prompted MILTON'S thought severe,
Of "*gay* religions, full of pomp and gold?"

XVII.

BRUSSELS.

(CONTINUED.)

MEDITATION.

O pondering soul ! with charitable heed,
(In the dread scale self-wanting as thou art !)
Judge not ! nor hence with spirit vain depart
Scoffing at others' ritual or creed.
Hath God or angel whispered thee indeed
That in this splendour *all* is hollow heart ?
That not a ray of piety can dart
On gilded crucifix or glittering bead ?
Each to his own dread Master stands or falls.
I have beheld, on icy pavements prone,
Beneath like roof, within like sculptured walls,
Such depth of truthful contrite anguish shown,
As, whensoever my better heart recalls,
Fills me with humbling charity alone !

XVIII.

BRUSSELS.

(CONTINUED.)

THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.

"Elle est comme un Ange!"

HER CHARACTER WITH THE PEOPLE.

But, did my spirit lack all aid beside,
To deem that in the self-same chosen seat
Meek piety and stateliest form may greet,
And placid goodness sit by grandeur's side,
How promptly were the lesson *here* supplied,
By yonder bending frame, and aspect sweet,
With every charm and modest grace replete
To human hearts or lineaments allied!
"An angel she!" a nation's voice hath said:
And such she looks—and, to be such indeed,
What lacks she now, save angel-wings outspread
To follow where her sister-seraphs lead?
E'en as the purest of the 'waking dead
Shall rise at last for their eternal need!

XIX.

ANTWERP.

If e'er a vulgar o'er a loftier thought
Could hold dominion, it might revel here.
And curl an English lip with quiet sneer
O'er haughty boasts to empty nothing brought.
This was the city which Napoleon sought
To build up Queen of Ocean far and near.
And with redoubled rampart, quay, and pier,
Harbour, and fort, crush LONDON into nought !
As sleeps the threatener, let the threat, too, sleep.
With the trite moral of all boastful story.
Behold the *mightier* harvest of *true* glory
Thou, favoured Antwerp ! still art doomed to reap !
The hallowed walls of thy cathedral hoary
Of RUBENS and the world the wonders keep !

XX.

ANTWERP.

(CONTINUED.)

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

And, lo ! the eternal picture ! if stern Time,
With ought of reverence for Genius' sake,
Art's perishable hues could lasting make
As the strong marble or the deathless rhyme.
Now, of the *spirit* of this work sublime,
Did we, with rapture full and meet, partake,
What thoughts of love, awe, penitence, might wake.
And to the throne of heavenly mercy climb !
From the glazed eye the light of love hath fled,
And from those lips divine the human breath :
And, on the cold, wan, shoulder, the drooped head,
(For us the crown of agony that wore,)
Heavily hanging with the weight of death.
Tells that the mighty sacrifice is o'er,
That the Cross triumphs, and the Lamb hath bled.

XXI.

GHENT.

"Voilà GAND, Monsieur! Oh! c'est une brave Ville! une brave Ville!"

MY GUIDE.

SUMMIT OF THE BEFFROI (BELL-TOWER).

Here once, in ages past, a monarch held
 Stern converse with a favourite worse than stern,
 And bade him counsel meet and full return
 For a revolt, by blood already quelled.
 Terribly thus the offenders' doom was knelled,
 "Destroy for ever! raze, o'erthrow, and burn!"
 And let the world from that destruction learn
 How CHARLES avenged him when his slaves rebelled!"
 "Follow!" the sovereign with calm voice replied.
 And to this airy summit (far above
 Ghent's trembling thousands) clomb with kingly stride:
 Then, to that hawk unwont to spare the dove,
 "Tell me," he said, "how many a Spanish hide
 'T would take to fashion such another '*Glore?*' " *

Gand (Ghent).

"Behold! when Glory's dreadful work is done.
 Heroes have time to pity—and to pun!"

XXII.

GHENT.

(CONTINUED.)

THE "PADDEN HOECK," HOUSE OF VAN ARTAVELDE.

Wherever, in a people's holy cause,
Valour and Virtue have been known to greet,
Tread there, O man, with reverential feet,
And pay the tribute of thy soul's applause !
'T was with such veneration I did pause
By an old dwelling in an old quaint street,
With a quaint name, now changed, *his* honoured seat,
Who freed wild beasts, to perish by their claws !
Over the doorway is the brand of Cain ! *
Thence, by few steps descending, not in vain,
To a dim vault-like room whose low roof sprung
From black-browed arches, dark with many a stain,
"Here," said a voice, "VAN ARTAVELDE was slain.
E'en at this window, to these bars he clung !"

* An inscription, recording the murder.

XXIII.

GHENT.

(CONTINUED.)

FONT IN WHICH CHARLES V. WAS BAPTIZED, IN ST. BAVON'S CATHEDRAL.

"Ambition, half convicted of her folly,
Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale."

THE GRAVE.

Ambition, from its cradle to its grave,
Gives thoughtful Wisdom choice of smile or frown :
But yesterday, I stood where CHARLES laid down
Half the wide empire of the world ! and gave,
For a poor cowl and penitential cave,
For a child's playthings, and a hermit's gown,
The mightiest sceptre and the richest crown
On either shore of the Atlantic wave !
That was his SECOND childhood, when the thirst
Of rule was slaked—when power had lost its charms,
And glory the fierce radiance which had curst
Europe so long with anguish and alarms ;—
Now I behold this relic of the FIRST,
While yet a helpless, sinless babe in arms !

XXIV.

BRUGES.

APPROACH.—RECOLLECTION OF WORDSWORTH'S SONNET,

“Bruges, I saw, attired with golden light.”

E'en such a glory in the gorgeous West
As WORDSWORTH saw, o'erhauling Bruges fair,
For me, as thitherward my steps repair,
Spans the rejoicing heavens with loveliest crest !
A sea of amber, on whose bright, pure breast
Float island-clouds of hues so rich and rare,
They prompt a wish to Fancy, gazing there,
For wings, “to flee away and be at rest !”
Poor child of Fancy ! thus thy humour runs,
Thou that in painted clouds can'st find delight !
But, if despised by earth's more earthly sons,
Smile back their scorn, and chant the moral trite
That earth's best joys are clouds, and treacherous ones—
Fleeting as those in air, and scarce so bright.

XXV.

BRUGES.

This city, to the thoughtful eye and heart,
Over decay (the silent and the hoary)
Wears a mild vesture of appealing glory,
Which Time, the spoiler, cannot rend apart.
O'er slumbering palace, grass-grown street, and mart,
It hangs, deep-dyed with tints of antique story.
In recompense of grandeur transitory,
And prompting still, "O BRUGE, how fair thou art!"
Thy sister, GHENT, yet bears, of hurrying pace
And loftier port, some remnant and dim wreck,
Dropped from the days when on the oppressor's neck
She smote, albeit with unavailing mace.
But *thou* thy deep decline art fain to deck
With pensive charms and melancholy grace.

XXVI.

BRUGES.

(CONTINUED.)

RECOLLECTION OF WORDSWORTH'S POEM, BEGINNING WITH THE VERSE,

“In Bruges town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled,
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet
O'er grass-grown pavements tread.”

Me, gentle Bruges, in thy silent streets,
(Whose antique gabled frontlets, soaring high,
Catch the last splendours of the evening sky,)
No strain of lute, no sound of music greets ;
No voice my country's lyric voice repeats,
To cheer or sadden me in wandering by,
From turret grate, or convent casement nigh,
Where pensive Beauty from the world retreats ;

.

Nor sound nor sight, to startle or embolden,
Breaks on the drowsy ear or quiet glance.
Grey walls and spires here sleep in shadowy trance,
Or glimmer there in sunset glory golden ;
And thou, thus picturesquely quaint and olden.
Art, in thyself, oh, Bruges ! a romance.

XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

ASPECT OF BELGIUM.

This smiling land, boon Nature's pampered child,
By genial skies and soil prolific blest,
Lacks yet of sweet VARIETY the zest.
The grateful interchange of *calm* and *wild*.
Far as the eye can dart, one aspect mild,
Fruitful and fair, is on the earth impressed ;
No torrent rolls, no mountain heaves its crest,
No vales descend, no toppling crags are piled.
Beautiful ENGLAND ! on thy shores alone
Each varied form of loveliness we greet ;
Thine, only thine, that loveliest landscape known,
The green wood crowning some monastic seat,
Grey abbey-walls, with ivy overgrown,
And a blue streamlet gushing at their feet !

THE PILGRIM AND THE FLOWER.

"In evil hour did he Bologna see,
And that sweet lady whom he there admired!"

DANTE.

Once, in a pilgrim's path, a flower sprang up,
So beautiful that while he gazed upon it
A trembling spirit shot into his heart,
And clung as if to tremble there for ever,
Making its resting-place no place of rest !
Ah, hapless pilgrim ! he had felt before
Like visitation in the flush of youth,
And wrestled with it, weary day by day,
And night by night, until it seemed subdued ;
But now its hour of triumph came again.

The flower of which I speak—(oh, ye who know not
How Fancy sports with Passion, and weaves all
Its fiery thoughts in her own glittering woof,
Smile if ye will, but smile far hence, I pray !)
This flower of which I speak had eyes and lips,
And brow and bosom ; nay, all lineaments
Worn by the loveliest of its perilous kind.
Such as I dare not, if I could, describe :
For 't is a peril even to *recall*,
Far more to gaze and listen. He, the pilgrim,
Listened and gazed, and therefore was undone.

Meanwhile, unconscious, dreamless of her power,
And innocent of all the grief she wrought,
And frank as purity itself, and kind
As goodness, never dreaming it can hurt
With frankness and with kindness, the sweet flower
Smiled with a sister's sweetest smiles on him,
And from her odorous lips breathed words like these—

“ This soil is not the soil that I have chosen
To bloom or fade in : yet a few brief days
And I shall be transplanted southward far ;
There come and see me, southward when ye pass.”

The pilgrim heard, and striving to conceal,
As best he might, a strangely troubled joy,
Promised with eager vehemence ; and so
Joy fled ; night came, the night of separation,
And the flower closed for him ! O mournful night !
O fatal flower, that made night mournful thus !

Now they, the florists of that garden strange,
The human heart, (so choked by passionate weeds,
And shaken by all tempests !) *they* will ask,
“ Went not the pilgrim, when his path indeed
Lay southward next, to gaze, as he had pledged him,
On that loved flower ? ”

————— No ; southward far he went,
And trod the very margin of the bank
Whereon, more bright, more fragrant still, she bloomed,
And breathed an atmosphere of sweetness round ;
But on and on he passed, and threw not even
One trembling, momentary glance on that
Which had so thrilled him with delight before !
And why? Capricious was he? or the slave
Of that most poor and hollow love of change
Which is the tyrant of all shallow hearts?
No! 't was a cause far, far remote from these
As truth from error, vanity from pride.
His heart was large, and though, within its realm,
Weakness and strength divided empire held,
And "Wisdom and Infirmary were brothers,"
And Pride, and Passion, and Ambition, strove
With the deep love of calm and brooding thought ;
And though it was all flame at Beauty's touch,
And keen, and sensitive, and plastic ever,
And facile of deep stamp from all things lovely.

And prone to dally with all dangerous charms,
And framed of all materials that make
Sorrow abundant in a world like this,
(Fancy, and tenderness, and dreaming thoughts
Of what *might* be, if love were all in all!)
Still, in its last recesses, Honour dwelt,
And trod down selfishness with kingly foot,
And breathed a generous terror to give pain
Where love would most give joy !

Thence rose a voice
On his departing ear, as south he turned,
A still soft voice, which breathed its mandate thus :
" Now, by all sacred trust in Truth and Good,
In Manhood, Virtue, Honour, generous Faith,
By all pure hope, and all unselfish thought,
By all that *worthily* can make the heart
Loved by the lovely, gaze not thou again.
E'en for an instant, on that lovely flower.

To woo Destruction in the guise of Joy,
To cherish Madness in the shape of Love!"

Did he not hear? He heard, and he obeyed:
With many a struggle, and with many a pang,
He heard, and he obeyed; and drew the dark
And heavy robe of Fortitude around him.
Even as one who girds him for a fight
With the most stormy passion of his soul!
And thus he passed; and thus joy passed from him,
And weeks have grown to months (months like to years!)
And he endures in silence, or but gives
Sorrow a faint low voice, in strains like these—
Strains which, should that sweet flow'ret ever drink
Into her bud-like bosom, let her say,
(And let *me* dream I hear the accents spoken!)
"Was it then Love? and *dared* not give a token?
Truth is the noblest burden of all song!
His was a promise honourably broken,
And they are brave who dare not do a wrong!"

“WITH SPIRIT CRUSHED.”

With spirit crushed, but not resigned,
 With aching heart I hear it said,
“Perchance the cruel are the kind,
 When hopeless love should *not* be fed.”
Alas! on bitterest fruit 't will feed,
 And cherish long the vital curse;
Alas! *how* long 't will live and bleed,
 When Sorrow's self is Passion's nurse!

I know not if my soul would be
 Saddened or soothed in after days,
Could memory whisper, “Still I see
 The tear that dimmed her parting gaze.”

There *was* an hour when *Pride* had rushed
To charm or dash Despair aside,
Alas! the heart indeed is crushed,
When Sorrow treads the grave of Pride!

We part, and in thy changeless eye
No answering sorrow I behold;
No shade of sadness makes reply,
But all is calm, and all is cold!
Oh, keenest stroke of Misery's knife!
Envenomed ne'er to heal again!
That we should love but *once* in life,
And vainly then, and vainly then!

LYRIC.

Again I come to thee, love!

O'er the desert, o'er the foam,

As an eagle rushes free, love,

Through the bright skies to its home!

As o'er the wave my bark, love,

Bounds to port with stormy glee,

As the shaft flies to its mark, love,

Again I come to thee!

On thy brow let joy and health, love,

Still the only jewels be,

And thy pure heart all thy wealth, love—

Again I come to thee!

MONODY

ON THE DEATH OF A LADY, A MOST DEAR AND
LONG-LOVED FRIEND.

“ Morte villana, di pietà nemica !”

DANTE.

“ Died, in Edinburgh, Nov. 6, 1838, Mrs. M * * * * * A * * * * *,
of Shandwick Place.”

EDINBURGH OBITUARY.

Brief, bitter words ! how much do ye impart
To press with icy hand upon the heart !
Brief, cold, and few, and yet enough to tell
The light is quenched I loved so long and well !
That final clouds have blotted from my eye
Another star in life's fast darkening sky ;

That earth, so bright and beautiful before,
Is withering to a desert more and more !

Oh ! loved from boyhood, with a love so pure,
Stern Virtue's self rejoiced it should endure ;
(For on *thy* lips *her* precepts lovelier grew,
And thoughts of thee were thoughts of virtue too !)
Could I roll back the sullen tide of years,
(Turbid with sorrow, bitter with my tears !)
Back to the parent-fount's enchanted brink,
Again its draughts of giddy joy to drink ;
If still the world were as the world I see,
Where should I find—oh, where ! a friend like thee !
With never-ceasing vigilance to dart
The glance of watchful love into my heart :
Still fostering there each nobler plant, and still
Up-rooting zealously its weeds of ill ;
All doubt, all fear, all sadness, to beguile,
And double every joy with sweetest smile :

From cold and sordid breasts to bid me turn,
And from my own each selfish wish to spurn ;
To warn, to prompt, to kindle, to restrain,
To chide in error, and to soothe in pain !

Dare I recall thee by the light divine
Remembrance kindles on Affection's shrine,
When all of virtue that can cease to be
Is lost to earth, as thou art lost to me ?
Recall thee as thou wert, in heart and mind,
All sweetness, goodness, purity, combined !
Placid in temper as the loveliest lake,
Whose crystal sleep no tempests ever break ;
In look and accents, bland, benign, serene ;
With modest worth's pure dignity of mien ;
And yet a spirit fervid as the light
Of tropic skies in all their noon-day might,
When virtue languished—generous freedom died,
Or “ patient merit ” bore the spurns of Pride !

Where *now* the open hand, the pitying breast,
For ever blessing, and for ever blessed?
Pulseless and cold!—Their work of love is done,
The prize achieved, the goal immortal won!
O thought to shame each heart of selfish clay,
Mourning whom God hath snatched to bliss away—
Mourning, with keener, bitterer pangs, the more
Sad Memory pictures all thou wert before!
Alas! as from his wound a sufferer's hand,
Delirious, tears the medicable band,
'Tis mortal frailty's doom—not wisdom's choice,
To mourn when loftier natures would rejoice!

For *Thee*, whose mournful image from my breast
(Lamented friend! the earliest, and the best!)
Distance, nor absence, friendships new, nor years
Many and long, vicissitudes, nor fears,
Sorrows, nor joys, remembered or forgot,
Have ever blotted, or shall ever blot!

'T is meet that I should hush this bitter strain,
 Sincere, though erring—fervid, though in vain ;
 Mindful of spirits pierced by keener darts—
 Of husband's, child's, and brother's shattered hearts ;
 Mindful of all each thus-bereaved one bears,
 Oh ! let *my* grief be mute at thought of theirs !

THE REQUEST.

TO A FRIEND (M. S. M.) DEPARTING FOR ITALY.

* * * *
 * * * *

Now, when ROME's midnight winds thy brow have fanned,
 And, like sad Manfred, by the moon ye see
 The Coliseum's mighty wreck expand,
 From those dark cypresses (if yet they be)
 That “ *seem to skirt the horizon, though they stand*
Within a bow-shot,” * pluck one branch for me.

* Byron's “Manfred.”

Then, the eternal fabric's Titan waste,
Solemnly slow, with venerating feet,
Enter, and each presiding genius greet ;
(Ruin and Immortality embraced,
Beauty and Glory, dimmed, but eneffaced,
And Time and Retribution—conclave meet !)
And when thy steps religiously complete
The arena's circling vast, sublimely paced,
A moment tarry ere they be retraced,
And, in the mighty void, *my* name repeat.
Last, wheresoe'er on broken arch, or seat,
Flow'ret, or weed, or herb, grey Time hath placed,
That, too, for me, with hand of friendly haste,
Gather, and cherish till again we meet !

TO FLORENCE.

(BY A RETURNING EXILE.)

No dream ! 'tis Florence—Florence in her beauty !
And, from the green breast of my native vales,
Again the gleam of her far walls I see,
With their magnificent outline of tall fanes,
And spires, and palace-roofs, and structures old,
Breaking the soft blue of the summer sky !

Not fainting pilgrims on the long-sought shrine,
Seen o'er the lessening desert, gaze with more
Of deep and pure delight than I on thee,
Queen-City of Etruria's verdant realm !

August abode of the august ! E'en now,
From very fullness of my heart, tears gush
To my glad eyes, and blot thee from their glance !

Florence ! on thy returning exile's ear
E'en the light breeze awakening o'er thee sighs
Melodiously as Beauty in sad dreams,
And, dimpling the blue Arno, seems to waft
From thy suburban haunts (cool bowers and shades,
Gardens and groves, with statues and bright founts
Sparkling through all, like angel eyes) a still
And soft-voiced murmur of departed days,
Breathing remembrance—as the strain we loved
In childhood's hour, long after heard, recalls
A childish joy, and bids the heart beat quick.
Yet let me linger here ! and gaze, and hope,
For hope of coming joy is joy itself,
More pure than the reality !

HYMN OF THE PENITENT.

“ Rend your hearts and not your garments.”

We have wandered, O Father of Life and of Love !

Far, far from thy statutes and Thee ;

And Thy peace, like the brooding repose of the dove,

No more on our spirits may be !

But when dark, from the far-spreading cloud of its terrors,

The storm of thy vengeance shall spring,

Though the marble of heart to the curse of their errors

All blindness and blasphemy cling—

Though Impenitence bare his fierce brow to the blast,

And the voice of the scorner be loud to the last,

Even then, O avenging and terrible God !

Spare the humbled in dust who shall bend to thy rod !

Far, far, Holy Shepherd of mercy and peace,

We have strayed from thy cherishing fold—

Where the steps of thy faithful ones tremblingly cease,

Ours have wandered, rebelliously bold !

We have hurried from Sion's high places our flight,

And from Siloa spotlessly gushing,

To the world and its perishing pleasure and might,

By its torrents all turbidly rushing.

Now, tempest and terror arise on our track—

Oh, Shepherd of mercy ! yet summon us back !

Oh, call, in thy mercy, long-suffering God !

We are humbled in dust—we have bowed to thy rod !

SONG.

Flow on, thou silent stream !

And as I watch thee flowing,

In the dying twilight's tender gleam,

With the soft breeze o'er thee blowing,

I'll tell thee where thy waters seem

So calmly, mutely going—

They go, methinks, where only

Happy lovers, day and night,

Wander joyously and lonely

Over banks all green and bright!

Gush on, thou torrent hoarse!

And as I watch thee gushing,

By the lurid gleam that tracks thy course,

From the storm-tints o'er thee flushing,

I'll tell the, child of Wrath and Force,

Where *thy* dark waves seem rushing—

They rush, methinks, where only

Parted lovers, day and night,

Wander lifelessly and lonely

Over banks all gloom and blight!

“A CEASELESS CRAVING——”

“Tutti li miei pensier parlan d’Amore!”
My every thought discourses still of Love!

DANTE.

A ceaseless craving gnaws my heart—

This absence is a sickening thing!

I bid the weary day depart,

But what for *me* hath night to bring?

It comes, and when an hour hath flown

In bitter musing o’er the past,

I *feel* and *dread* to be alone,

And rush to crowds again at last.

I fly to pleasure’s gayest haunts,

The feast, the rout, the crowded ball,

But ’midst their proudest, loveliest vaunts,

I see a lovelier form than all!

I see her where the dancers meet,
And turn from meaner grace away—
I hear her sweet voice, doubly sweet,
But nought that others sing or say.

And is the seal for ever set?
Can hopeless love be thus intense?
Oh! teach me—teach me *to forget*,
Or charm the lovely phantom hence!
Oh! give me Lethe! or, at worst,
Another, though a *keener* pain—
Or show why hope should *not* be nurst
In hearts that love, *although* in vain!

STANZAS.

"Where is the life that late we led?"

OLD SONG.

I.

"Where is the life that late we led?"

O words breathed forth with thoughtful breath!

A monody o'er pleasures dead—

The moral pause 'twixt life and death!

They ring the knell of all that 's dear.

A dirge are they o'er rapture sped.

Low-murmuring to the Heart's quick ear

"Where is the life that late we led?"

II.

How many an exile's burning heart

In these brief words its doom may tell !

How many a lover, doomed to part,

Record in these his sorrows well !

Forgot in joy's brief hour alone,

When Joy *might* joy to hear them said,

Again they rise when joy hath flown—

“ *Where is the life that late we led ?* ”

III.

Vocal with them is every sigh

The captive and the wanderer pour ;

The moan of all who droop and die—

Of all who struggle and endure !

Each wrong of chance and change they wreak,

From Health's sweet couch to Fever's bed—

From weal to woe—from strong to weak—

“ *Where is the life that late we led ?* ”

IV.

As "Deep to Deep," heart calls to heart,
When hope and love are tempest-wrecked;
And still, to lips that pine apart,
Those wailing words arise unchecked.
Oh, thou that grow'st more dear and dear
With every thought of what hath fled,
How sweet it were from *thee* to hear
"Where is the life that late we led?"

M A D R I G A L.

(FROM VOLTAIRE.)

To thee, with loveliest eyes, and lovelier heart,
Simplicity and Nature sweetly fall:
And ever, unpretendingly, thou art
Triumphant, in thy beauty, over all.

If thou had'st lived when lived the fairest she—
Fair Gabrielle, that coldest hearts could stir,
I know not then what we had said of *thee*,
But we had nothing—nothing said of *her*!

"I REMEMBER."

"The joy of grief!"

OSSIAN.

I remember, I remember
Far more sweetly many a day
Of life's sad and stern December,
Than its sunniest hours of May!
Every pang of love's bequeathing
I remember sweetly well—
Sighs that blessed the heart in breathing,
Tears that hallowed as they fell!

And my soul, in that pure sadness,
 Drinks more ecstasy from tears
 Than the shallow heart of gladness
 From the laughter of long years !

Who remembers, who remembers
 All love's sacred sorrows past,
 He shall cherish in his embers
 Sparks of passion to the last !
 There, immortal, shall they linger,
 Gilding thoughts of holiest bloom,
 Charmed from age's freezing finger,
 And the shadow of the tomb !
 And his soul, in that pure sadness,
 Shall have richer balm from tears
 Than the shallow heart of gladness
 From the hollow mirth of years !

THE OLD AND THE NEW,

OR 1842 AND 1843.

(WRITTEN NEAR MIDNIGHT, DECEMBER 31, 1842.)

“Vanity of Vanities! saith the Preacher—all is vanity!”

Ere the last of thy sands have *quite* run through,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and two!
Let us pause to ask what hopes we see
For One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE?
If the wreck of those o'er *thy* grave we strew,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and two,
Again for the heart built up will be
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE?

Or, if any fair picture that Fancy drew
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and TWO,
As fair to the heart and the fancy will be
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE?
Alas! alas! of the bubbles we blew
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and TWO,
Full many, full many, blown *out* will be
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE!
And every folly of *thine* we rue,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and TWO.
We are just as likely to rue in *thee*,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE!
Though of half the smiling things we knew
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and TWO.
Scarcely *half* survive to gladden in *thee*,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE!
Though of life's best fruits and flowers that grew
In One thousand eight hundred and forty and TWO.

Scarcely half can be grafted on *thy* poor tree,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE !
Yet, just as idle, we bid thee adieu,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and TWO !
And, just as foolish, cry " hail ! " to *thee*,
One thousand eight hundred and forty and THREE !

A PRAYER.

" Out of *the heart* are the issues of life."

In vain, O GOD ! on *thee* we call ;
In vain we strive *thy* praise to sing ;
Unless the *heart* before thee fall,
A humble and a contrite thing !

Pondering its leaves of wrath and wrong,
What dreadful records do we read !
How vile the good ! how weak the strong !
What merey do the purest need !

How shall our voices dare arise
To HIM deceit that cannot brook !
To HIM that is of purer eyes
Than on iniquity to look !

O THOU that lay'st thy chastening rod
On hearts more pure than mine can be—
All-merciful, all-mighty GOD !
Have tenfold mercy upon *me* !

WHITBURN, 1839.

THE VISIONS OF OUR EARLY YOUTH.

The visions of our early youth
Are not the baseless things they seem :
For Earth *hath* love, and hope, and truth—
And goodness is not all a dream !

It is the wreck of *faith in these*—

Our hollow trust in treacherous things—
That turns the soul's health to disease,
And clouds her gaze, and clogs her wings.

In *manhood* are our falsest dreams—

Power's glittering court, Gain's sordid mart—
These dash aside Affection's streams,
And change, and chill, and cheat the heart!

Oh! root from mine, great God ! each lust

Unknown to warm and taintless youth ;
And give me back its generous trust
In love, in nature, and in truth !

THE KING AND THE BARON.

A TALE OF WILLIAM RUFUS.

“He feared God but little—*man* not at all.”

WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY.

King Rufus was hunting in Hampshire woods,
In the desert his father had made :
A hunter as free with other men's goods
As ever shot stag in a glade.

And worthy was he of his father's name,
For both were of “fiery dust,”
And played exceedingly well at the game
Called afterwards “*cut and thrust.*”

To die "with harness on their backs,"

They were ready at any call ;

And with mace, and brand, and battle-axe,

"No babes to strive to withal."

With a heavy hand, plain truth to tell,

They grasped both sword and sceptre ;

And this old England knows full well,

For they won her—and they kept her.

And the game in every forest glade

They stretched their harpy claws to ;

And forests for themselves they made,

And very hard forest laws too.

And therefore the men of monkish lore

Were severe upon them, rather,

And said that they loved the deer and boar

"As if they were their father !" *

* See the Saxon Chronicle.

Now, being such *royal* beasts of prey,
In the summer woods or vernal,
May account, perhaps, for their singular way
Of *showing* their love paternal.

Many children, a certain age above,
Have fathers that don't quite suit them,
And wouldn't think much of the "fatherly love"
Which only loved to shoot them.

King Rufus was hunting (again I say)
In Hampshire, as blithe as a lark,
And every shaft he shot that day
Had a good fat deer for its mark.

And he hunted and shot o'er holt and dale,
O'er dale and holt and lea—
When one, in a coat and hood of mail,
Rode up right *hastilie*.

“ Now hail, now hail, in the forest green,

Now hail, thou gallant king!

And pleasanter far may thy sport have been

Than the news which now I bring.”

“ Now hail to *thee* who hailest me so,

Now hail to *thee*,” quoth the king ;

“ I care not the twang of a cowherd’s bow

For the worst news thou can’st bring.”

“ Gramercy, then, for my news when told !”

Quoth the man in the mail, “ perdie !

For *HELL*, the Norman baron bold,

Is a rebel and traitor to thee !”

Oh, then ’t was redder the Red King grew,

And he said, “ Ride thou in my rear :

Thou hast given me sturdier work to do

Than chasing the forest deer.”

Then away and away rode the fiery two,
Till they heard the ocean roar;
And never a bridle-rein they drew
Till upon the wild sea-shore.

There lay a bark, with a mariner dark
Pacing the anchored deck;
“It is better,” quoth he, “at anchor to be,
Than driving on shore, a wreck!”

“Now spread thy sail to the whistling gale,
And ply thy sea-craft well;
For I must stand on Norman strand
Ere the chime of vesper bell!”

“It bloweth a storm!” cried the mariner dark—
“It bloweth a storm!” cried he;
“And I would not, for thrice ten thousand mark,
My king were on yonder sea!”

“ Good lack, good lack ! ” quoth the king, as he furled
The mantle his breast around,
“ Didst thou ever know yet of a man in this world
Who heard of a king that was drowned ?

“ Spread thy sail to the whistling gale,
And ply thy sea-craft well :
For I must stand on Norman strand
Ere the chime of vesper bell ! ”

And they spread their sail to the whistling gale,
That stormily whistled and sung ;
And he stood on the sand of the Norman strand
Ere vesper chimes were rung.

And before *another* vesper bell
Rang over the Norman plains,
The Baron HELD, sooth to tell,
Was a captive man in chains.

“ Ho ! Bird that would not bide in cage !

Methinks I’ve clipped thy wing !”

And Heli, with a look of rage,

Made answer to the king—

“ Yes ! thou,” quoth he, “ *hast* conquered me,

And I disdain to sue :

But if *again* my steps were free,

I *know* what I would do !”

Now, of King Rufus *this* I say

(To give the fiend his due),

He knew the best and noblest way

A brave man to subdue.

All passions fierce—all passions bad,

In his stormy spirit grew :

But yet his stormy spirit had

A flash of grandeur too.

“ Is ’t so ? ” quoth he ; “ Why, let it be—

Play thou thy game anew !

Go, *take* again thy liberty,

And *show* what thou would’st do ! ”

The baron stood a little space,

A little space stood he ;

And then, with Norman, knightly grace,

Bent down upon his knee—

And “ By my fay ! ” he then ’gan say,

“ Thou caust *indeed* subdue !

I’ll serve thee to my dying day—

And *THAT*’s what I will do ! ”

WAIL FOR THE DEAD!

THE FEUDAL DEATH-CHANT OVER THE MURDERED

FROM THE ROMANCE OF "RUFUS.")

I.

Wail for the dead! the mighty dead,

The peerless brave, the spotless true,

The sleepers of the "narrow bed,"

Which never dream of glory knew.

Wail for the knightly spirit flown,

The generous bosom stilled for aye,

The arm of terror feebler grown

Than worms that gorge it as their prey—

Wail for the dead!

II.

Wail for the dead ! but mix for him,
Who dies on Conquest's golden verge,
A tone of rapture in the hymn,
A note of triumph in the dirge !
For him earth's sweetest sounds arise
To peal on Valour's closing ear,
The plaudits shouts that rend the skies
When Victory lifts her soldier's bier !
Wail for the dead !

III.

Wail for the dead ! the *early* dead,
Who perish in the morn of Fame,
Ere yet her glorious noon hath shed
The lustre meet for warrior's name !

For them may youthful Beauty wake

At sorrow's loneliest hour to weep—

Alas that sorrow cannot break

Sullen Oblivion's iron sleep !

Wail for the dead !

IV.

Wail for the dead ! the injured dead !

And doubly deeply wail for those

Whom not the shaft of WAR hath sped,

But ambushed MURDER's felon-blows !

Oh ! mock not them with tear or moan !

But, fierce as Winter's stormiest flood,

Let Vengeance in her prophet-tone

From earth to heaven cry " Blood for blood."

Wail for the dead !

v.

Wail for the dead ! But wake, oh ! wake,

Stern dweller of the trampled breast !

Thou of the thirst that will not slake,

The burning pulse that will not rest !

Shrunk be the coward hand which lets

Thy “ cup of trembling ” drop, and *lives* !

Withered the bosom that *forgets*—

Accursed the caitiff who *forgives* !

LOVE, BEAUTY, AND VERSE.

A TRIFLE.

“ All that is worth remembering in life is the *poetry* of it.”

HAZLITT.

If all beauty were taken
To where it first grew :
And the world were forsaken
By Poetry too,
Need we ask Locke, or Bacon.
What *Lore* then would do ?
Locke and Bacon !—pooh, pooh !
Let them sleep on their shelves ;
Very little they knew
Of those volatile elves,
Love, Beauty, and Verse,
Who speak best for themselves.

And 'tis thus that they say —

“ We are sisters and brothers !

And if one fly away

'T is soon joined by the others.

So if ever Life's paths

Grow so rugged and prickly

That Beauty and Poetry bid them adieu,

Love (as sure as we talk on 't) will take the
hint quickly,

And fly away too !

Were the skies never sunny,

Would the birds love the air ?

If the flowers gave no honey,

Would the bees cluster there ?

What would Verse ever be

Without Beauty's inspiring ?

What would Love ever see

In the world worth desiring,

If Beauty, the while,
With her heavenly smile,
Didn't keep Love and Poetry always admiring?

And as Beauty and Poetry
Are but two names
For one thing (as one fire
Ascends in two flames),
What is Love but the spirit
That's missioned to feed them,
And over the world
Like an Angel to lead them?
So, if e'er, as you say,
On some terrible day
Both Beauty and Poetry fly far away,
Need you ask like a niddy, what *Love* then will do?
No, he'll fly away too:
That's what he'll do!

THE SHORTEST DAY.

I.

Pile ye the faggot-heap—

Autumn is dead !

Winter, the iced,

Reigns in his stead :

Faster and faster

Come, Ravage and Dearth !

Winter, your master,

Is lord of the earth !

II.

Spread we the feast—

Bid the curtains be drawn—

Twilight hath ceased,

And 't is long to the dawn—

Hark to the rising gust!

Hark to the rain!

Hark to the sleety shower

Hurled on the pane!

III.

Heap the hearth's splendour up—

Hail to the blaze!

If we *must* render up

Homage and praise

To the cold frozen one

Nature obeys,

Be *thou* our comforter,

SHORTEST OF DAYS!

IV.

With a halo of glory,

(As though 't were in scorn

Of Winter the hoary,)

Up-springeth thy morn!

Briefest of brief ones !

Thou yieldest a token

One rod of the Tyrant

Already is broken !

v.

The team to the shed,

And the flock to the pen—

They know not the night-wave

Is ebbing again ;

But joy, joy, to *your* pillows,

O children of men !

LIGHT's glorious billows

Are *flowing* again !

vi.

Dash the torch, and the taper,

And the dim lamp, away—

Through storm and through vapour

Come, life-giving DAY !

Joy's glance, with thy morrow,
 More joyous shall be,
And the pale cheek of Sorrow
 Grow brighter for thee !

VII.

O Day ! lovely Day !
 What a joy to perceive
Thy earlier dawn,
 And thy lingering eve !
O Light ! lovely Light !
 With thy heavenly ray
Thou shalt scatter the might
 Of bleak Winter away !

THE COTTAGE BEAUTY.

When Autumn-winds seek woodland glades,

With yellow leaves to strew them,

I saw, in Durham's "gothic shades."

(May never axe undo them!)

The veriest pride of cottage maids

That ever wandered through them !

"I was one of those delicious dreams

Which seem by Heaven intended

To make, with their enchanted gleams,

One happy moment splendid !

Although so transient, that it seems

Scarce born before 't is ended.

My path led down through winding lanes.

And, deep in one of those

Where ever-dreaming stillness reigns

With indolent repose.

Its triple front of small dark panes

A cottage-window shows.

A cottage, at a green hill's base

With gentle curve that falls

To where the river-currents race

Beneath the abbey walls—

No lovelier over-shadowed place

My memory recalls.

By that green slope, while many a bird

Sang praise to Him who sloped it,

And while the morning breezes stirred

The elm-boughs that o'er-coped it,

A gently opening sash I heard.

And turned to mark who oped it.

Oh, ye who tread with footsteps rash
Where then my fortunes drew me,
Beware of that half-opening sash,
And the dream it opened to me
Of beauty that with sudden flash
Seemed darted through and through me!

I saw a brow so arched and clear—
Not Raphael's self had limned it—
A lip, whose bloom would scarce appear
Though fifty poets hymned it—
An eye, as if an angel's tear
Had gently dewed, not dimmed it!

No form that e'er had charmed my sight
So charmed, or so amazed it!
No lovely hand of loveliest white
So mocked the lip that praised it;
I almost blessed, from sheer delight,
The flower to which she raised it!

I cannot paint that brief bright glance

With the fairest hues of diction,

Which sped my blood in livelier dance,

Attuned to sweet conviction

That Life hath glimpses of romance

More beautiful than fiction !

Nor how I strove, "by hook and crook,"

With idly-loitering air,

To seem as if no thought I took

In loitering idly there—

To look as if I *didn't* look,

And stare *without* a stare !

'T was one of those brief pleasant dreams

Which seem by heaven intended

To make, with their enchanted gleams,

One happy moment splendid !

Although so transient that it seems

Scarcely born before 'tis ended !

Lone wanderer of romantic nooks !

Why grieve when I impart

That but (for all my "hooks and crooks")

One glance 'twas mine to dart ?

Since we may steal ten thousand *looks*

Before a single *heart* !

HOLIDAY.

Old is the murmur, old and trite,

And runs the wide world round,

That Earth hath many a juggling sight,

And many a cheating sound ;

E'en now there rings from earth to sky,

Where yonder schoolboys play,

To *me* a sort of *mocking cry*—

The cry of HOLIDAY !

At times the rustic drops his spade,

At times the gravest play,

At times the busy sons of trade

Keep idle holiday :

At times the veriest moper sings.

The veriest drudge is gay ;

But there are drudging *thinking* things

Who keep *no* HOLIDAY !

We give our feet a resting time.

Our hands a time to play ;

But we cannot give our weary *hearts*

A moment's holiday !

They toil from weary hour to hour.

They labour on alway.

The vassals of a cruel power

Who gives *no* HOLIDAY.

THE SEQUEL TO

“THE PILGRIM AND THE FLOWER.”*

“Of love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? * * * * *
* * * * *

For Love himself took part against himself
To warn me off, and Duty, loved of Love,
(O this world's curse! beloved, but hated,) came
Like Death betwixt, and crying, ‘Who is this?
Behold thy bride!’ she pushed me from thee.”

TENNYSON.

Yet once more, O ye worshippers of Love—
Yet once more, O ye gentle ones, in whom
Passion and pity and pure thoughts abide,
With touches of the Purifier, Grief;
Yet once more list, I pray you, to *this* grief
Of mine!—of mine, for the torn heart that bled,

* See Vol. II., p. 243.

The lips that murmured, and the eyes that rained
 Winters of sorrow from their sleety lids,
 Were as my own, so linked and bound to me
 Was that pale pilgrim; he, who at the voice—
 "The still small voice"—of Honour, whispering stern,
 Fled from the loveliest flower e'er yet foregone
 By heart and eye at Honour's "still small voice!"

Onward he passed, and life and nature rolled,
 For him, with changeless current—slow and sad.
 His day was as the night, for heavy gloom;
 His night was as the day, for sleepless care;
 His spring was as the autumn, for dead leaf;
 His summer was as winter, for dead hope;
 And all things darkened round him, leaden-hued.
 Onward he passed, and felt how, each to each,
 Sorrow and thought are ministrant; and how
 Wide scattered are the balm-flowers of our life,
 With large drear interspace of weed and thorn.

Fertile of all that lacerates and shocks.
Onward he passed, alone and *not* alone,
For Sorrow was his sister and his guide,
And journeyed with him ever, side by side ;
And paced lone chambers with him, step for step ;
And turned the saddest pages of sad books,
And made him learnèd with their saddest lore ;
And tainted the fresh morn with odours sick ;
And dimmed the noon-tide with her pallid gaze ;
And stood betwixt him and the evening stars,
When they would twinkle peace into his soul ;
And laid her wan cheek on the self-same pillow,
And told the heavy hours with self-same breath,
Of sighs made heavier by those vigils sad ;
And woke him ere the owl had ceased to scream—
Ere, in the windy East, the rack had caught
Upon its sullen edge a reddening gleam,
And said, " Behold ! how faithful unto thee
Am I ! And I will tend thee evermore ! "

Thus he endured, and life and nature ran
Their course with wonted current.

Then came voices,
Other, far other, than pale Sorrow's. One,
As of a pitying spirit, with sweet tones,
Gently remonstrant 'gainst self-torturing things,
And it said soothingly, " Poor wandering heart !
A cruel lord hath Honour been to *thee* !
Thou could'st have gazed, methinks, upon a star,
Loveliest in heaven, without the madman's wish
To stretch thy hand and grasp it ! He, thy lord,
Hath plucked thine eyes forth, for one loving glance !
A cruel lord hath Honour been to thee ! "

So died the pitying voice ; and then rose one
As of a *mocking* spirit, coldly wise
In the world's wisdom, of the world beloved.
And it spake scoffingly, " Art *thou* the man,

So good, the heroic moral fool, who fled
From loveliness, as others fly the pard,
Whose beauty is its terror? Art thou he?
Good soul! I fear that thou hast fled in vain!
Good soul! if 't was a sin to look and love,
Is it less sinful *still* to love, *not* looking?
Take heed; lest, *half* obeying, thou offendest.
Honour, the immaculate, thy earthly God!
He is a jealous God, and will demand
Ritual of anguish from thee, late and soon:
Thou that hast sinned in having eyes and seeing,
Thou that hast sinned in deeming sweetness sweet,
And beauty beautiful! Alas, good soul!
Thy penance doth fall short! thou art not yet
Utterly wretched to thy heart's content,
And *his*! Ply keener scourges! tread
On sharper thorns! be heart-wrung to the quick!
Lest, through the thick walls of thy wretchedness,
Some clink of frailty let in hope and solace!

It hath been said, good soul, that Folly bears
No children like *half* martyrs!"

So the mocker
Mocked, and the pale-eyed mocked one so endured;
But, evermore, when the sharp taunts had died,
That "still small voice," whereof I sang, again
Breathed soft, "Endure, wait, weary not; have thou
Faith in the end, which is not of man's shaping;
The end which comes though all things strive against it,
The end which crowneth all things with meet garland
Of blight or bloom, of amaranth or poppy,
And in its large and fruitful bosom brings
Justification of all ill and pain,
And large and fruitful recompense for each—
Endure!" And he obeyed, and life ran thus
Its course with wonted current.

Last came one

That, with a touch, when all besiegers else

Are driven from the high towers of Resolve,
Oft shatters down their haughtiest bulwarks—CHANCE,
And well nigh made *all* bulwarks vain for *him* !
For in his path, when least feared, hoped, or dreamed,
Fresh as young life, and sudden as quick death,
Amidst the roar of a dense city throng,
Sprang the sweet Flower, all light and bloom again !

O then the joy, had love been all in all
In mutual hearts, not prisoned sole in one !
O then the joy, if but two gentle stars,
With mutual beam consenting, had shone down
Even on the mutual dread of instant parting !
O then the joy !——But thou, my soul, have heed
To thy true mission in this mournful song :
Grief claims it all, and Grief will have her due.
Again the pilgrim gazed where he had vowed
To gaze no more. "Thou knowest all," he said,

"There needs nor speech nor silence now from me—
Thou knowest all. Dost thou forgive?" he said.

Then raised the Flower her ever loveliest eyes
Of soul-like beauty to his fevered glance,
And, from a lip too beautiful for hope,
Breathed these remembered accents, (*I, too, heard—*
It was no dream! I heard the sweet words spoken,
Above the roar of all the city throng!)
"*Was it then LOVE, and dared not give a token?*
TRUTH is the noblest burden of all song!
His was a promise honourably broken,
And they are brave who dare not do a wrong!"

One instant more, and with faint smile as cold
As e'er on ice by coldest moonlight thrown,
She fled, and the pale pilgrim was alone
Amidst the fevered city's hurrying throng.

Slow, with faint step and heart, he paced along
 Into the mist of grateful gloom far cast
 By the deep shade of the cathedral vast
 Over the blinding Day's insulting glare ;
 And to and fro paced miserably there,
 As captives pace their miserable cell ;—
 Till, by the deep voice of the mid-day bell,
 Roused, he went forth, all desolate—Oh, where?

THE MOULD AND THE MATTOCK.

Quoth the Mould to the Mattock,

“ Why piercest thou me ?

Busy troubler of rest !

Delving torment and pest !

Let me be !

Of no treasures possest
In my cold wormy breast
That can heap Mammon's chest,
Why break'st thou my rest?
Let me be!"

To the Mould quoth the Mattock,
"Rest, troubled Earth, rest!
Were thine all the treasure
Of Earth, without measure,
In thy cold wormy breast
Sleep were best;
Rest, troubled Earth, rest!

I but dig for a bed,
By the low-lying head
Of the treasureless Dead
To be pressed.
Cold house for cold guest,
Let him in, give him rest!"

SONNET

TO THE THREE BEAUTIFUL MISSES R———, OF
T—— G——, YORKSHIRE.

“Appear! obey my lyre’s command!
Come like the Graces, hand in hand!”

WORDSWORTH; *The Triad*.

Beautiful beings! ye who thus, from all
Beauty around ye, Beauty’s chaplet bear!
Ye who are fairest amidst many fair,
And every eye and heart have made your thrall!
How oft—whate’er my future course befall,
Whate’er of joy may brighten, or whate’er
Of sorrow darken, or destroy, or spare—
How oft your loveliness shall I recall!

Dare my heart speak in many a fervid line,
It could but tell what every glance hath told ye,
That unto me ye are as things divine,
And not of earth the elements that mould ye!
Well may this first, last gush of praise be mine,
For I shall never, never more behold ye!

CLIFF BRIDGE, SCARBRO', 1844.

YOUTH AND AGE;

OR, MAY AND DECEMBER.

I.

Pretty one, pretty one!

Whither, I pray,

Tripping so joyously,

Whither away?

Fresh as the dawn, and blithe as the day,
Tripping so lightly, skipping so gay,
 Tripping, skipping,
 Whither away?

II.

Fresh as the dawn,
 And blithe as the day,
I to the lawn
 Am tripping away;
When April is gone, we young folk say,
Then comes the merry month—then comes the May!
 And the lads and the lasses
 All bouned them for play!
And *I* am the chosen one,
 Queen of the May!

So, to the lawn,
Blithe as the dawn,
 Skipping, tripping,
 I hasten away!

III.

Weary one, dreary one!
 Whither, I pray,
Creeping so joylessly.
 Whither away?
Heavy December like, not like the May,
Stooping so wearily, drooping so grey,
 Stooping, drooping,
 Whither away?

IV.

Heavy December like—
 Not like the May.

Fast-dying ember like,

Lo! I decay!

When autumn is gone, we old folk say,

Then comes the frozen time, withered and grey!

And the old and the cold

Make them ready for clay—

And *I* am a frozen one,

Full of decay!

So, to the tomb,

Far from May-bloom,

Stooping, drooping,

I totter away!

HIC JACET.

A CHURCHYARD LYRIC.

Who lacks for thoughtful verse a theme,
Here may his soul embrace it,
Where two brief words the sole wreck seem
Of every tongue—"HIC JACET."

Brave, busy World, thy lip is curled
In scorn the whilst I trace it,
But I will teach thee, busy World,
The moral of "HIC JACET!"

On th' old grey tomb as lone we sit,
Or round, with slow step, pace it,
Of all that on the slab is writ,
What read we but "HIC JACET!"

Build, Pride! thy mausoleum vast,

Until the clouds embrace it!

'T is well if Time will spare at last

One vestige of "HIC JACET!"

Build, Cunning! in some *secret* place—

Time shall at last *dis*-place it,

And keenest antiquarians trace

But dim wrecks of "HIC JACET!"

However Wealth may load the shrine

O'er lordliest tomb, to grace it,

There is no heraldry like *thine*,

Brief, setuecheonless "HIC JACET!"

And e'en though *Truth* shall prompt the line,

Above, and *Genius* trace it,

There is no eloquence like *thine*,

Brief, eloquent "HIC JACET!"

Keen money-chaser! thou who hast
So wrung thy soul to chase it!
Must all thy wealth be summed at last
In two poor words, "HIC JACET?"

Must Learning, too, with all the pride
Of glittering wit to grace it,
Lie down with dullness, side by side,
Beneath the same "HIC JACET?"

Must conquerors droop their arm of strength,
And conquering worms debase it?
And haughtiest Valour creep at length
Beneath *thy* shield, "HIC JACET?"

Their realm, who strove all earth to win,
Can three poor footsteps pace it?
Must all their empire shrink within
Thy petty bounds, "HIC JACET?"

The loveliest face beneath the sky,

Here grinning skulls out-face it—

And all its flatterer's praises lie

Deep-buried in "HIC JACET!"

Your lapidaries' wit is shrewd,

On whatsoe'er they trace it,

And marks them with keen sense imbued

Of what *thou* art, "HIC JACET!"

Each panegyric, false or true,

How shallowly they trace it!

But, large and deep they chisel *you*,

All-paramount "HIC JACET!"

Oh *THOU*, sole-left of all my breast

Once cherished to embrace it!

Since Time and Fate above the rest

Have written long "HIC JACET—"

When the few numbered days shall flit

(And fleetly now they race it!)

Ere on thy father's grave is writ

(If writ it be) "HIC JACET"—

Come thou, and muse that grave above,

And, ere one weed deface it,

Add, from thy heart of filial love,

"RESURGAM!" to "HIC JACET!"

Nov. 1847.

THE END.

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